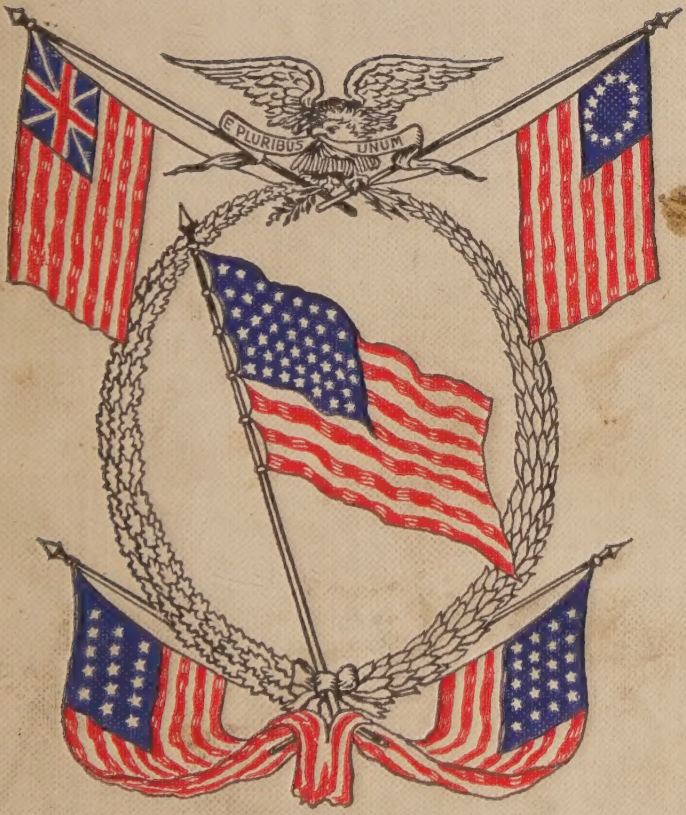
The EVOLUTION of THE AMERICAN FLAG



GEORGE CANBY AND LLOYD BALDERSTON

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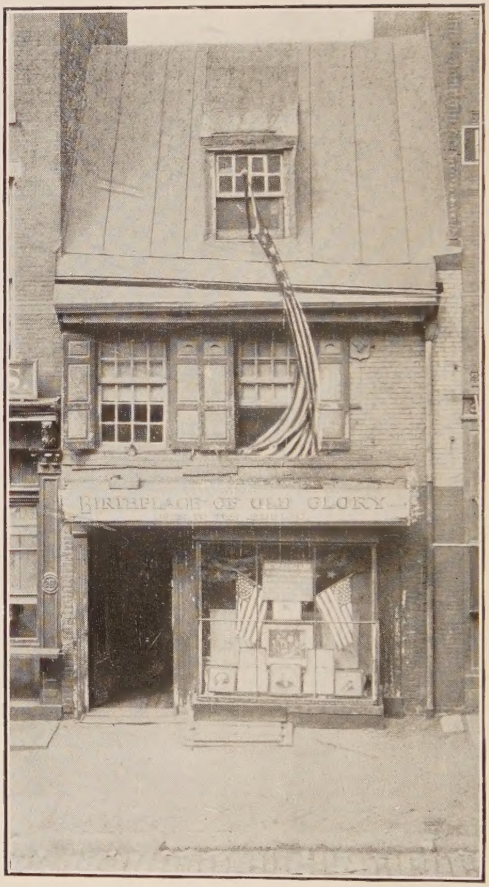

The Flag House.

THE EVOLUTION
OF THE
AMERICAN FLAG

FROM MATERIALS COLLECTED BY THE LATE
GEORGE CANBY

By LLOYD BALDERSTON, Ph.D.

Philadelphia
FERRIS & LEACH
27 South Seventh Street
1917

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PREFACE.

Many books have been written on the history of the American Flag. The subject presents serious difficulties, which have been frankly recognized by such writers as General Schuyler Hamilton, Admiral George H. Preble and P. D. Harrison. Some have copied statements from their predecessors, and where the story seemed incomplete have filled in the gaps with romance. The present volume adds a few authenticated facts to those which have been heretofore published, but does not concern itself with a detailed refutation of any of the romances which have been injected into the story of the Stars and Stripes.

Most of the material for the book was gathered by George Canby, of Philadelphia. His serious work on it may be said to have begun after the death in 1890 of his brother, William J. Canby, who had spent much time on the subject.

George Canby was the last surviving grandson of Elizabeth Claypoole, who, when she was the widow of John Ross, made the first American Flag containing stars. He was a member of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, and brought to the research a minute knowledge of the history of Philadelphia and a mind well trained in his-

torical criticism. Many times during his investigations his sensitive soul was tried when he found surmise masquerading as fact, conjecture substituted for records, and romance disguised as history.

He read all that had been printed about the history of the flag, examined many old manuscripts, searched through all the periodical literature of the Revolutionary period, examined all the fac-similes and printed copies of Revolutionary documents accessible in the libraries of his native city, and personally scrutinized all the papers in the Government archives at Washington which could have any bearing on the early history of the Stars and Stripes. He also engaged the services of a reliable firm in London who make a specialty of literary research, to conduct an extensive search among the Revolutionary manuscripts preserved in London, and to examine the captured battle-flags in the museums there.

After all this, the quantity of actual recorded fact discovered about the Flag, down to October, 1777, remains very small. Most of the known facts are recorded in Preble's encyclopedic work. Nearly all of these have been traced to their sources and verified. George Canby had arranged most of his material in chronological order, and was preparing it for the press, when

his work was cut short by his death in 1907. The introduction which follows is in his own words, as are some parts of the body of the work. In large part, however, the wording is due to the present writer, a nephew of George Canby, who has gone over the whole ground with minute care, in the effort to put into presentable shape the work which is essentially that of his uncle.

All of the many friends who have aided in the researches which George Canby had so much at heart should be thanked by name in this preface. Most of them, however, are quite unknown to the writer, who can therefore only extend a word of thanks in this impersonal way to all who have helped in clearing up some part of the obscurity which surrounds the history of our beloved flag, and express the hope that every one who has control of any manuscripts of the Revolutionary period will examine them or cause them to be examined, in the search for further references to the flag, to the end that the obscurity may be entirely removed.

L. B.

West Chester, Pa., 1909.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

In this edition a few errors have been corrected and two paragraphs added.

The hope expressed in the preface to the first edition that additional facts in regard to the early history of the flag might come to light has not been realized.

So far as the writer is aware, only one flag of the Revolutionary period, other than those mentioned in the first edition, has been brought to public notice since that edition was published. This flag is briefly described on page 86.

L. B.

Ridgway, Pa., 1917.

INTRODUCTION.

At the beginning of the twentieth century with our beautiful Emblem of Liberty so conspicuous on every hand, known everywhere, in every land, on every sea, it is indeed hard to realize that only a little more than a hundred years ago, as colonists of the British Empire, our forefathers were living under the Royal Flag of England.

Even with this idea in our minds, it seems now almost incomprehensible that those of our forefathers who had the shaping of our destinies in their hands,—that noble band of patriots, including the great Washington himself,— should have left us with no records which tell us precisely how our flag came into existence. To this day the great majority of the American people are in ignorance of the real facts connected with its history.

It is therefore a matter of great interest to find that after a most careful and exhaustive research, running through a course of many years, and a thorough study of the whole subject, all that is known certainly of the development of the Flag of the United States, popularly and quite appropriately known as the Stars and Stripes, may be said to consist, in the only light

so far revealed to us, of just three incidents, quite distinct, yet closely correlated: two "of record," and one, the central and most important, a consistent and well-sustained family tradition.

These happenings occurred in the following chronological order:

1. On January 1st, 1776, the display by Washington, over his camp at Cambridge, of the Great Union, or Continental, Flag of the United Colonies.

2. On or about June 1st, 1776, the making by "Betsy Ross," in Philadelphia, under the direction of General Washington, of a flag consisting of thirteen stripes, red and white, with a union of thirteen five-pointed white stars on a blue field.

3. On June 14th, 1777, the passage by Congress of a resolution adopting the flag above described as the Flag of the United States.

In the following pages a compilation of events covering the period of these three incidents furnishes them with their proper historical setting, and adds all known particulars which have any bearing on the subject in hand.

GEORGE CANBY.

George Canby,
1829-1907.

The Evolution of the American Flag

The Evolution of the American Flag

CHAPTER I.

FLAGS WHICH PRECEDED THE STARS AND STRIPES.

Little is known in regard to the colors carried by the colonial troops in the earliest operations of the Revolutionary War. The army under General Artemas Ward which was besieging Boston at the beginning of June, 1775, consisted mainly of New England men. They used some flags belonging to the several colonies. The present discussion aims only to bring together what is known in regard to the origin of the flag of the United States. No attempt will be made, therefore, to enumerate or describe the earlier flags unless they are in some way related to the Stars and Stripes.

Washington was appointed * Commander-in-chief of the colonial forces by the Continental Congress, sitting in Philadelphia, June 15th, 1775. He set out from Philadelphia on the 21st of June, accompanied by Generals Lee and

* This and other matters from the proceedings of Congress may be found under their appropriate dates in the Journals of the Continental Congress, published by the Government.

Schuyler, and escorted by the famous Light Horse Troop of Philadelphia as far as Kingsbridge, beyond New York. This troop had a banner or flag which was presented to them later in that year by their first captain, Abraham Markoe. It was made of yellow silk, double, elaborately painted and gilded on both sides with suggestive designs. The much-worn banner, mounted between glass plates, is still preserved as a precious relic by the First City Troop, in a fire-proof safe at their armory in Philadelphia. In its upper corner, next to the staff, is a small, nearly square "canton," composed of thirteen alternate blue and white stripes, the white stripes being made of silver leaf. This is believed to have been the first instance in which the thirteen colonies were typified by thirteen stripes. (See colored plate, facing this page.)

Washington arrived at Boston on the 2d of July (the battle of Bunker Hill having taken place since his appointment as Commander-in-chief), and proceeded to the camp in Cambridge. The terms of enlistment of the men under his command mostly terminated at or before the end of the year. The necessity of organizing a new army induced Congress to appoint a committee to confer with Washington. This committee, consisting of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Lynch and Benjamin Harrison, arrived in Cambridge

Flag of Philadelphia Light-Horse.

on the 16th of October. The conference included also several officers of the governments of the New England colonies. This conference was in session for about a week. Minutes of their proceedings are preserved in the archives of the Department of State at Washington. With them is also preserved a letter in the hand-writing of Benjamin Franklin to John Hancock, President of Congress, signed by all three members of the committee, describing their work. Neither in the minutes, which also recite their full instructions from Congress, nor in the accompanying letter, is any mention made of the subject of a flag. Erroneous statements* on this point have been repeatedly published.

Under the plan of reorganization agreed upon by the conference, the new army came into exist-

* Schuyler Hamilton, in his "History of the Flag," published in 1852, says in a foot-note on page 60, "We may justly conclude that the Committee of Conference, composed of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Lynch, and Mr. Harrison, had the subject of a flag under consideration, and that the flag prepared under their supervision was the one displayed as the flag of the United Colonies, on the day the army organized by them, General Washington, etc., went into being." This is a very reasonable surmise, but it is supported by no contemporary testimony of any kind. Nevertheless, subsequent writers have generally accepted this guess of Schuyler Hamilton as correct, and without doubt or question attribute the Great Union Flag (see page 20 and Appendix F), or Grand Union Flag, or Cambridge Flag, as it has been variously called, to the committee.

ence, as noted in the military orders for the day under Washington's own hand, in his "orderly book," as follows:*

"Head Quarters, January 1st. 1776.

"Parole—*The Congress.* Countersign—*America.*

"This day, giving commencement to the new "Army, which in every point of view is en- "tirely Continental, the General flatters him- "self that a laudable spirit of emulation will "now take place, and pervade the whole of it. "Without such a spirit few officers have ever "arrived to any degree of Reputation, nor did "any Army ever become formidable. . . . "

Then follow several pages of sound advice, with numerous orders to be obeyed, ending with this characteristic sentence:

"This being the day of the new establish- "ment, the General pardons all the offences of "the old, and commands all prisoners, (except "Prisoners of War), to be immediately re- "leased."

Some interesting circumstances attending the establishment of the Continental Army are best told in the following extracts from a long letter written by Washington to his secretary, Joseph Reed, then in Philadelphia:†

* American Archives, 4th Series, Vol. IV, p. 568.

† American Archives, 4th Series, Vol. IV, p. 570.

"Cambridge, January 4th, 1776.

"Dear Sir:— . . . We are at length favored "with a sight of His Majesty's most gracious "speech, breathing sentiments of tenderness "and compassion for his deluded American "subjects. The echo is not yet come to hand, "but we know what it must be, and as Lord "North said, (and we ought to have believed "and acted accordingly), we now know . . . "the ultimatum of *British Justice*. The speech "I send you. A volume of them was sent out "by the Boston gentry, and farcical enough, "we gave great joy to them (the red-coats, I "mean) without knowing or intending it, for "on that day, the day which gave being to our "new Army, but before the proclamation came "to hand, we had hoisted the Union Flag in "compliment to the United Colonies. But be- "hold, it was received in Boston as a token of "the deep impression the speech had made on "us, and as a signal of submission. So we "learn by a person out of Boston last night. "By this time I presume they think it strange "that we have not made a formal surrender of "our lines. . . . "

Under the same date Washington writes* to John Hancock, President of Congress,

". . . As it is possible you may not yet have "received His Majesty's most gracious speech,

* Sparks, Vol. III, p. 221.

"I do myself the honor to enclose one of many
"which was sent out of Boston. It is full of
"rancor and resentment, and explicitly holds
"forth his Royal will to be, that vigorous
"measures must be pursued to deprive us of
"our constitutional rights and liberties.
"These measures, whatsoever they may be, I
"hope will be opposed by more vigorous ones,
"and rendered unavailing and fruitless,
"though sanctified by the name of Majesty, a
"name which ought to promote the happiness
"of his people, and not their oppression.

"I am Sir, etc. etc.

"GEO. WASHINGTON."

It would seem that up to this time Washington had believed in the possibility of a reconciliation with Great Britain, and that the Grand Union Flag was intended to typify this lingering devotion to the mother country. This ensign,* sometimes quite appropriately called the Cambridge flag, consisted of thirteen alternate red and white stripes, representing the thirteen united Colonies of North America, with the English Union † (the cross of St. George combined

* See colored plate, facing this page.

† The British Union at that time was a blue field, with the red vertical cross of St. George, edged with white, and the white saltire (diagonal cross) of St. Andrew. This had been adopted by act of Parliament at the time of the union of England and Scotland in 1707, for use on all national

Grand Union Flag.

Also called Great Union Flag, Union Flag, Continental Flag and Cambridge Flag. Hoisted at Cambridge, Jan. 1, 1776

with the cross of St. Andrew) in the upper corner. The British Union in the flag was no doubt intended as an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Great Britain.

It must be noted that this flag was adopted without any formal order or legislative authority from the Continental Congress. It may, however, be considered official for the short time during which it was in use, since it had the sanction of General Washington in its adoption. Excepting Washington's letter to Reed, already quoted, careful and extensive search through government and other manuscripts has discovered no writing or record throwing any light on the origin of the Grand Union Flag. In view of the leading part which Washington took in the establishment of the present national ensign (as will appear in the second chapter), it seems probable that he was the prime mover in the adoption of

banners and flags of every kind. James I had ordained in 1606 that it should be carried by both English and Scotch vessels in addition to any other flags when they were upon the high seas. The British Union was changed in 1801, upon the admission of Ireland, by adding the red saltire of St. Patrick, placing it as a red stripe in the middle of each of the white stripes of St. Andrew's cross. The union is for some purposes used separately, and is commonly called the Union Jack. It is also combined in various ways, most commonly being placed in the corner of a red field as our starry union is placed in the striped field of our national ensign.

the earlier form. It was natural that the General should select as the appropriate time for the first unfurling of the new emblem, the day on which the new army came into being; and the enthusiasm with which it was greeted was a good augury for the success of the American cause.

Somewhat later on the same day arrived the King's speech, or "proclamation," as Washington called it, with its "rancor and resentment," and its insulting proposals. That Washington was stirred to resentment by the proclamation is shown by the scorn and irony with which, in the letters already quoted, he refers to the overtures of the King toward his "deluded American subjects." The fate of the last petition to the King, which had been rejected with disdain, the burning of Portland (Falmouth) within a short time, and other outrages committed by the British, were matters still fresh in the minds of the Americans, and now the news was confirmed that twenty thousand Hessians had been hired by George III to assist in their subjugation. The soldiers were not in a mood to be conciliated by the King's speech, and the large number of copies which General Howe had sent out from Boston under a flag of truce for general distribution were promptly burned in the camp.

On account of the war, it was impossible to procure any considerable supply of bunting or

other suitable material, so that very few real bunting flags were made at this period; and most of the few records in which mention is made of a flag or standard are so indefinite that we are quite at a loss to understand what kind of a flag is alluded to. It is, in fact, impossible to tell to what extent the Grand Union Flag was used, or to determine at all accurately how long its use was continued. But few instances have been found in which a flag or colors are mentioned in either private or official papers during the early period of the war. Some of these must now be considered.

In September, 1775, two floating batteries made of plank, pierced near the water-line for oars, carrying four swivels, and a heavy gun at each end, were launched on the Charles River, near Boston. They opened fire on Boston in October, created great alarm and damaged several houses. They carried the "Pine Tree Flag." Maine was at that time a part of Massachusetts, and on her admission to the Union as a State in 1820 continued the pine tree on her escutcheon. Maine has ever since been called the "Pine Tree State."

A number of schooners were also built at Salem, Marblehead, and other convenient points near Boston. They were fitted out as war vessels by order of Washington, and commissioned by

him. On October 20th, 1775, Colonel Reed, General Washington's secretary, wrote* to Colonels Glover and Moylan, who had been appointed agents for fitting out the armed vessels, " Please fix upon some particular color for a flag, and a signal by which our vessels may know one another. What do you think of a flag with a white ground and a tree in the middle; the motto, ' An Appeal to Heaven '? This is the flag of our floating batteries." Colonels Glover and Moylan replied the next day from Beverly, that as Captains Broughton and Selman, who had sailed that morning, had none but their old colors, they had appointed as a signal by which they would be known by their friends, the ensign " at the main topping lift." This correspondence took place at the same time that the Committee of Congress was in conference with General Washington upon the reorganization of the army, but it will be observed that the question of the colors or signals for the vessels alluded to was a matter with which the committee had no concern, just as it had no official connection with the adoption of the Grand Union Flag.

It was in the same month (October, 1775) that the Continental Congress in Philadelphia took steps for the establishment of a regular navy for the allied colonies. Under this order several

* Washington's Letters, B, Vol. 1, p. 84.

vessels of varied capacity were soon purchased and fitted up, and on December 22d Esek Hopkins was appointed commander-in-chief of the fleet of five vessels then about ready to sail. The "Alfred," formerly a merchant ship called the "Black Prince," was selected by Commander Hopkins to be the flagship of the fleet, and John Paul Jones, the senior of the five first-lieutenants, was assigned to the "Alfred."

Congress seems to have made no provision for colors for the fleet thus created, but there are several contemporary allusions to the flags which they carried. One of these is in a letter* written October 10th, 1783, to Robert Morris by John Paul Jones. He says that when the commander-in-chief came on board, the "Flag of America" was hoisted by his (J. P. J.'s) own hand, being the first time it was ever displayed on a regular man-of-war. He does not give the date, which was probably early in January, 1776, nor does he describe the flag of which he speaks. It is said that a striped flag, without any union, or canton, was in use about that time. In some instances a rattlesnake was represented undulating across the body of the flag, and this is supposed by some to be what Jones called the "Flag of America." It seems pretty certain, however, as will pres-

* Sands, "Life and Correspondence of John Paul Jones," pp. 304-309. New York, 1830.

ently be shown, that the flag of Hopkins's fleet was the Grand Union Flag. The fleet set sail January 5th, 1776.

The sailing of the fleet is described in a contemporary paper found in the American Archives, Volume IV, fourth series, pages 964 and 965.

"Newbern, North Carolina, Feb. 9th 1776.

"By a gentleman from Philadelphia we "have received the pleasing account of the "actual sailing from that place of the first "American fleet that ever swelled their sails "on the Western Ocean, in defence of the "rights and liberties of the people of these "Colonies, now suffering under the persecut-"ing rod of the British Ministry, and their "more than brutish tyrants in America. The "fleet consists of five sail, fitted out at Phila-"delphia, which are to be joined at the Capes "of Virginia by two ships more from Mary-"land, and is commanded by Admiral Hop-"kins a most experienced and venerable sea "captain. The Admiral's ship is called the "Columbus, after Christopher Columbus, the "renowned discoverer of the Western World, "and mounts thirty-six guns, twelve and nine "pounders, on two decks, forty swivels, and "five hundred men. The second ship is called "the Cabot, after Sebastian Cabot, who com-"pleted the discoveries of America made by

"Columbus, and mounts thirty-two guns. The "others are smaller vessels, from twenty-four "to fourteen guns. They sailed from Philadel- "phia amidst the acclamations of many thou- "sands assembled on the joyful occasion, "under the display of a Union Flag, with thir- "teen stripes in the field, emblematical of the "thirteen United Colonies; but unhappily for "us, the ice in the river Delaware as yet ob- "structs the passage thence, but the time will "soon arrive when this fleet must come to "action. Their destination is a secret, but gen- "erally supposed to be against the Minis- "terial Governors, those little petty Tyrants "that have lately spread fire and sword "throughout these Southern Colonies. For "the happy success of this little fleet, three "millions of people offer their most earnest "supplications to Heaven."

The gentleman from Philadelphia must have been confused in regard to the flagship. The "Columbus" was one of the five, the "Cabot" another, and the "Andrea Doria" a third, but the flag-ship was the "Alfred."

The fleet, being detained by ice in the river, did not sail from the Capes of the Delaware until February 17th, 1776. They went to the Bahama Islands, and on the 1st of March anchored off the island of Abaco with two captured schooners belonging to New Providence. On the morning

of the 17th of March, the fleet entered the harbor of New Providence, and sailed away the same day, taking with them nearly a hundred cannon and various military stores and also the governor of the islands. An account of the exploit was published in the *Town and Country Magazine,* London, July, 1776, from which we quote.*

"New Providence, May 13th.

"The Americans have been here, and have "taken the King's guns, brass mortars, and "other warlike stores. Their fleet consisted of "seven sail, Commodore Hopkins, commander. ". . . They took Governor Brown and Secre- "tary Babbage prisoners, and Mr. Irvin, be- "longing to Charlestown, all of whom were in "the fleet when they engaged the Glasgow "man-of-war. The colours of the American "fleet were striped under the union with thir- "teen strokes, called the thirteen united Col- "onies, and their standard was a rattlesnake, "motto, 'Don't tread upon me!'"

This makes it reasonably certain that the flag of the fleet was the Grand Union flag,† and the

* In Hamilton's "History of the Flag" this passage is quoted from the "London Ladies' Magazine." It no doubt appeared in both.

† It will be noticed that this fleet sailed from Philadelphia on the 5th of January, 1776, only four days after the Grand Union Flag was first unfurled at Cambridge. This makes it seem that notice of the adoption of the new flag

rattlesnake flag was in all probability the standard of the commander-in-chief. The last statement is based on a contemporary description* of a flag presented to the South Carolina Assembly in February, 1776, by Colonel Gadsden: "An elegant standard, such as is to be used by the commander-in-chief of the American Navy; being a yellow flag, with a lively representation of a rattlesnake in the middle, in the attitude of going to strike, and the words underneath, 'Don't tread on me.'" So far as is known, neither of these flags had any sanction or authority from the Continental Congress.

Who first suggested that a flag of thirteen alternate red and white stripes should represent the thirteen united colonies cannot now be determined, nor at what date such a flag was first used. The time must have been just before the appearance of the Grand Union flag on January 1st, 1776. The suggestion of such a combination might have come from a similar flag used by the East India Company. Their ships carried striped flags with nine, ten and other numbers of

must have come from Boston by letter or messenger who left that city before the first of the year; otherwise the flags could hardly have been ready by the time the fleet sailed. Again comes up the possibility that the Franklin, Harrison and Lynch committee knew about the flag.

* American Archives, 4th Series, Vol. V, p. 508. South Carolina Provincial Congress.

stripes. One in particular is described which had thirteen stripes and a St. George cross on a white ground for a canton. This flag was used near the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is described in a publication entitled "The Present State of the Union," fourth edition, published in London in the year 1704. It would thus appear that there was nothing new in the selection of red and white stripes to form the distinct and brilliant contrast now so familiar as the field of our national emblem. The symbolic meaning attached to the colors by sentimental writers probably had no place in the minds of the designers of the flag.

A flag is generally regarded as the emblem of a particular nation, definitely established, and so long as different members of Congress held divergent views in regard to separation from the mother country, it is not surprising that no action was taken in the matter of a flag. We do not know what may have been said on the subject, only that the record is silent. Jared Sparks says very truly, "The eloquence and internal counsels of the old Congress were never recorded; we know them only by their results." It does not appear whether the Cambridge flag had any authority behind it except that of the commanding general or not, but it is certain that it continued to be used for some time. It is men-

tioned in several contemporary writings, which we will examine in chronological order.

Before taking up these references to the Cambridge or Grand Union Flag, it is worth while to note a passage in regard to regimental colors in Washington's orderly book.*

"Headquarters, 20th February, 1776.

"Parole—*Manchester.* Countersign—*Boyle.*

"As it is necessary that every regiment "should be furnished with colours, and that "these colours bear some kind of similitude to "the regiment to which they belong, the col- "onels, with their respective brigadiers, and "with the quartermaster-general, may fix "upon any such as are proper and can be pro- "cured. There must be for each regiment the "standard for regimental colours, and colours "for each grand division, the whole to be small "and light. The number of the regiment is to "be marked on the colours, and such motto as "the colonel may choose, in fixing upon which "the general advises a consultation among "them. The colonels are to delay no time in

* This and other quotations from Washington's Orderly Book were copied by George Canby from the original in the Records and Pension Division of the War Department. The Library of Congress has the abridged transcript made by Richard Varick toward the close of the Revolution. Some parts have been printed in various collections of archives, and references to them are given in some instances.

"getting the matter fixed, that the quarter-
"master-general may provide the colours for
"them as soon as possible."

"G°. WASHINGTON."

This order not only shows Washington's anxiety that the troops should be supplied with colors, but implies that the necessary materials were not to be had easily. As will appear later, it is not likely that the order was carried out to any extent.

The next reference involving the Cambridge flag is the following from the Pennsylvania Colonial Records, Volume X, page 494:

"24th of February, 1776.

"The Committee of Safety at Philadelphia
"ordered that Captain Proctor procure a flag-
"staff for the fort, with a flag of the United
"Colonies."

The flag intended was in all probability the Grand Union Flag.

On March 17th, 1776, the British evacuated Boston, and two divisions of Continental troops, under Generals Ward and Putnam, occupied the city. "The flag of thirteen stripes, the standard of the Union," was on this occasion carried into Boston by Ensign Richards.* The safety of New

* American Archives, 4th Series, Vol. V, p. 423.

York next claimed the attention of Washington, and on the 13th of April he arrived there with his army, and General Putnam was placed in command of the city.

The next date on which the use of the Cambridge flag is mentioned is the 15th of May, 1776. The *Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertizer*, published by W. & T. Bradford, in its issue of May 29th, 1776, has an account of the proceedings of the convention at Williamsburg, Virginia, on May 15th, in which a resolution was adopted favoring separation from Great Britain. A grand celebration followed, with toasts, etc., and then the account proceeds:

> "The Union Flag of the American States
> "waved upon the Capitol during the whole of
> "this ceremony, which being ended, the sol-
> "diers partook of the refreshments prepared
> "for them by the affections of their country-
> "men, and the evening concluded with illum-
> "inations and other demonstrations of joy,
> "every one seeming pleased that the domina-
> "tion of Great Britain was at an end."

The next reference to the Grand Union Flag is found in a letter preserved among the naval records of England. It is from Capt. Chapman, of H.M.S. "Shark," to Vice-Admiral Young, dated July 30, 1776, in Martinico, Fort St. Pierre's Bay.

"I saw a Sail in the Offing with Colours "which I was unacquainted with (being red "and white striped with a Union next the "Staff) . . . found to be an American armed "ship, mounting 18 guns, 6 pounders, and "wears a Jack, Ensign and Pendant. I have "since learnt her name to be the Reprizal, "Capt. Weeckes."*

In order to follow the story of the Grand Union Flag, we will now pass over the events of the two months intervening between May 15th and the arrival of the British before New York. A letter from Ambrose Searle, confidential secretary of Admiral Lord Howe, written to the Earl of Dartmouth soon after the arrival of the fleet in New York harbor, describes the flag carried by the American troops, and shows that it was the same that had first been displayed at

* This quotation is given on the authority of Messrs. B. F. Stevens and Brown, 4 Trafalgar Square, London, who wrote to George Canby, under date of October 22, 1902: "We proceeded in accordance with your wishes to extend our search amongst the naval records for the same period (June, 1776, to July, 1777) in the hope of finding some description of the flag used by American ships. We have examined all the likely volumes of 'Captains' Letters' and 'Admirals' Dispatches,' but only one specific reference has been found, viz.:" (See above.) The "Reprizal" is the vessel which a few months later carried Franklin to France. (See "Works of Franklin," Federal Edition. Putnam's, 1904. Vol. VII, p. 149.)

Cambridge at the beginning of the year. The letter is a long one, dated July 25th, 1776, and contains the following passage: "They have set up "their standard in the fort upon the southern end "of the town. Their colours are thirteen stripes "of red and white, alternately, with the English "Union cantoned in the corner." (See manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth, Stephens' facsimiles, in European Archives;—American Revolution, Vol. 24, No. 2040, p. 6.)

Benson J. Lossing states* that he found among the papers of General Schuyler, who had command of the Northern Department, with headquarters at Albany during this period, a water color sketch of the "Royal Savage," one of the little fleet on Lake Champlain in the summer and fall of 1776, commanded by Benedict Arnold. The drawing shows the Grand Union Flag, with thirteen stripes and the English Union, flying from the mast-head.

After the battle of Valcour Island, Arnold, in the "Royal Savage," delayed the British vessels long enough to permit some of the flotilla to escape under cover of the night. He then ran the vessel aground and set fire to her, her flag flying from the peak until the flames brought it down. That the flag used on this occasion was the

* See "Life and Times of Philip Schuyler," Benson J. Lossing, edition of 1872, pp. 113 and 114, Vol. II.

Grand Union is shown by a manuscript preserved in the British Museum collection, No. 32,413. It is a narrative of the northern campaign of 1776 by Lieut. William Digby, serving under Sir Guy Carleton. Under date of October 14th, 1776, is the following:*

> "We were very impatient for an express, and
> "did not know well what to think, when about
> "3 o'clock a canoe was perceived at a great dis-
> "tance, making all the way possible for our
> "camp. On the nearer approach, we perceived
> "it was Sir Francis Clarke, the General's aide-
> "de-camp, who, waving the enemy's colours,
> "thirteen stripes, declared the day was all our
> "own."

The Royal Savage was burned on the night of October 13th, so the two accounts agree in showing that the Cambridge flag was in use up to that time. No definite evidence of its use after October, 1776, has yet been found.

* Quoted in a letter to George Canby, dated 20th September, 1902, from B. F. Stevens & Brown. See Appendix H for account of Digby's diary.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAKING OF THE FIRST STAR-SPANGLED BANNER.

That modification of the Grand Union Flag, which has been for more than one hundred and thirty years the national ensign, was adopted by Congress by a resolution dated June 14th, 1777. The first flag of the new design was, however, made a little more than a year previous to the date of the resolution. Remembering that the records of Congress contain no mention of the Grand Union Flag, which remained in use certainly for the greater part of a year, it is not surprising that this modification of that flag was in existence for more than a year before any mention of it found its way into the Congressional Journal.

The time between the arrival of the army in New York and the battle of Long Island witnessed very important transactions in Congress. Sentiment in favor of independence had been growing rapidly, and during this period it crystallized, first in the resolutions of May 10th and 15th, and finally in the great Declaration. The change of sentiment on the part of Washington is perhaps typical of what was going on in the general mind. On October 9th, 1774, he had written* to Captain Robert McKenzie, who had

* Ford's "Writings of Washington," Vol. II, p. 444.

served under him in the French and Indian War, "No such thing" (as independence) "is desired by any thinking man in America." While he was in Philadelphia in May, 1776, he received a letter from his brother, John Augustine Washington, announcing the action of the Virginia Assembly instructing their representatives in the Continental Congress to support the movement toward independence. Washington replied* in part as follows:

"Philadelphia, 31 May, 1776.

"Dear Brother:—Since my arrival at this "place, where I came at the request of Con- "gress to settle some matters relative to the "ensuing campaign, I have received your let- "ter of the 18th, from Williamsburg.

"I am very glad to find that the Virginia "Convention have passed so noble a vote, and "with so much unanimity. Things have now "come to such a pass as to convince us that "we have nothing more to expect from the jus- "tice of Great Britain."

This letter shows that Washington was in full sympathy at this time with the movement toward independence. The new nation must have a flag entirely unlike that of the mother country, and it seems that a new design was worked out during Washington's stay in Philadelphia, between

* Ford's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IV., page 105.

May 22d and June 5th, 1776. No contemporary account, so far as known, contains any allusion to the designing and making of this flag, but in order to understand the conditions as clearly as possible, we shall go over in some detail the movements of Washington during this time, and the correspondence relating to them.

Two letters* from Robert Morris to Washington will show the important place held by the former in the counsels of Congress.

"Philada. May 11th 1776.

"Sir:—In compliance with an order of Con-
"gress, passed yesterday, we forward by the
"bearer hereof, Ten Tons of Gun Powder,
"which your Excellency will cause the proper
"officers to receive, and upon this and every
"similar occasion we beg the favor of a line
"from you or the Commissary acknowledging
"the receipt of such Powder or other stores as
"we may send to your department.

"We have the honor to be
"Your Excellency's
"most obd't hble servt.
"ROBERT MORRIS,
"Chairman.

"By order of the Secret Committee † of Congress.
"His Excellency,
"Gen'l Washington."

* MSS. in the Library of Congress.

† On September 18th, 1775, Congress resolved to appoint

"Philadelphia. May 16th. 1776.

"Sir:—The inclosed letters will discover to "your Excellency that the Congress have "ordered Two Hundred and forty four mus- "kets to be forwarded from Rhode Island to "New York, for the Continental Service, and "as it is probable you may think proper to give "some directions about the mode of getting "them safe down, we trouble you with these "open letters, that you may have the opportun- "ity of forwarding them and of adding thereto "what you may think necessary. We have the "honor to be

"Your Excellency's
"obdt hbl servt
"ROBERT MORRIS, Chairman.

"By order of the Secret Committee.
"His Excellency
"Genl Washington."

In the Journal of Congress, under date of May 16th, 1776, occurs the following entry:—

"Resolved—That the president write to "General Washington, requesting that he will "repair to Philadelphia as soon as he conven- "iently can, in order to consult with Congress

a committee of nine to procure powder, arms, and other military stores. Robert Morris was not a member of the original committee, but was appointed December 13th, 1775, in place of Thomas Willing.

"upon such measures as may be necessary for "the carrying on the ensuing campaign."

In obedience to this resolution, John Hancock writes* as follows:—

"Philadelphia, May 16th 1776.

"Sir:—I do myself the Honor to enclose you "several Resolutions passed by Congress, to "which I beg leave to refer you.

"The Congress being of opinion that it is "necessary as well for your Health as the pub- "lic service, that you shall embrace the earliest "opportunity of coming to Philadelphia, have "directed me to write to you, and request that "you will repair to Philada. as soon as you can "conveniently, in order to consult with Con- "gress upon such measures as may be neces- "sary for the carrying on the ensuing Cam- "paign.

"I hope the situation of the great affairs "with which you are intrusted will admit your "making the excursion which I apprehend "may be serviceable to your health. In which "case I request that you will please to honor "me with your and your Lady's Company at "my House, where I have a Bed at your service "during your continuance here, and where "every endeavor of mine and Mrs. Hancock "shall be extended to make your abode agree- "able.

* MS. in the Library of Congress.

"I reside in an airy, open part of the City,
"in Arch Street and Fourth Street. If this
"should be agreeable to you it will give me
"much pleasure.

"I am to inform you that Congress have this
"day appointed Horatio Gates, Esq., a Major-
"General, and Thomas Mifflin, Esq., a Briga-
"dier-General in the Continental Army. A
"commission for the former I transmit by this
"opportunity. I have delivered one to Mr.
"Mifflin here.

"I could wish, if consistent with the service
"it might be agreeable to you to direct these
"two gentlemen to repair to Boston. But I
"would not urge a Matter which entirely rests
"with you. I know your Disposition will
"prompt you to make as agreeable an arrange-
"ment as possible.

"I have the Honor to be with respectful
"sentiments and esteem

Sir, your most obt. hbl. sert.

"JOHN HANCOCK, President.

"His Excellency
"General Washington.

"P. S.—Since writing the foregoing, I have
"been told that your Lady, not having had the
"Small Pox, has intentions of taking it by In-
"oculation in this City. I beg that that cir-
"cumstance may be no prevention to your
"making use of my house; it is large and very
"Commodious, and every accommodation

"about it is at your service, and you may de-
"pend that Mrs. Hancock will give the great-
"est attention to your Lady, should she incline
"to take the Disorder. I shall be peculiarly
"happy if my Invitation may be found agree-
"able to you."

Notwithstanding this cordial invitation of President Hancock, Washington did not accept his hospitality. On May 22d he and Mrs. Washington arrived in Philadelphia and put up at the City Tavern on South Second Street, which was then a popular hotel. He remained in Philadelphia until June 5th, when, accompanied by Generals Gates and Mifflin, he set out for New York, where he arrived the next day. He was not in Philadelphia again until August 2d, 1777, a period of more than a year. Of his doings during the fifteen days of his stay in 1776 we have but scanty records.

On Friday and Saturday, the 24th and 25th of May, at the request of Congress he attended a portion of each session. On the 25th Congress appointed a committee of fourteen members "to confer with General Washington, Major-General Gates, and Brigadier-General Mifflin, and concert a plan of military operations for the ensuing campaign." It was also "Resolved that notice be given to the Colonels of the Association that it is the desire of Congress that they draw out their

battalions in general review on Monday morning as early as possible, and that Congress, with the Generals in town, propose to attend the review at 9 o'clock." The *Pennsylvania Gazette* of May 29th has the following report:—

"On Monday afternoon, May 27th, General "Washington, members of Congress, Gen'ls "Gates and Mifflin, reviewed the four battal- "ions, the Light Horse, and three artillery "companies of the City Militia, amounting to "2,500 men; also two battalions of Continental "troops. The Indians who are come to town "on business with Congress attended the Gen- "eral in reviewing."

On May 28th Washington wrote the following letter* to Major-General Putnam at New York:

"Philadelphia, May 28th 1776.

"Sir:—I received yours of the 24th inst. "with its several Inclosures, and the Letters "and Invoices from General Ward, giving In- "telligence of the fortunate Capture made by "our armed Vessels, on which event you have "my congratulations.

"I have wrote Genl. Ward, as you will see "by the inclosed Letter, (which having read "you will send by Post) to send forward to "New York Col°. Putnam's Demands, and also "such articles as Col°. Knox may apply for,

* See Ford's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IV, p. 103.

"out of the Cargo taken. In like manner I "have desired him to send me as soon as possi- "ble, part of the Powder and eight hundred "of the Carbines, which will greatly assist in "making up the Deficiency in this Instance.

"As to the Plan for employing the Armed "Vessels, I have no objection to its being "adopted, provided it will not frustrate the "main design for which they were fitted out. "That I would by no means have injured, as it "is a matter of much importance to prevent a "Correspondence between the disaffected and "the enemy, and the latter from getting sup- "plies of Provisions; but if this End can be "answered, and the other advantages in the "Plan mentioned, it is certainly an eligible "one.

"The great variety of Business in which "Congress are engaged, has prevented our set- "tling what I was requested to attend for, "tho' we have made several attempts, and a "Committee has been appointed for the pur- "pose Day after Day; nor can I say with Pre- "cision when I shall be at Liberty to return. "I must therefore pray your attention and "Vigilance to every necessary Work; and fur- "ther if you should receive, before I come, cer- "tain advice and such as you can rely on, of "the enemy's being on the coast or approach- "ing New York, that you inform me thereon by "Express, as early as possible. I do not wish

"an alarm to be given me without Founda-
"tion; but as soon as you are certified of their
"coming, that it be instantly communicated to
"me, and order given by the Express who
"come, to bespeak at the different necessary
"Stages on the Road, as many Horses, as may
"be proper for facilitating my Return and that
"of the Gentlemen with me, with the greatest
"expedition.

I am, Sir,
Yrs. &c.
"G. WASHINGTON.

"P. S.—I desire you'll speak to the several
"Col[ls] & hurry them to get their colours done."

On receiving this letter, General Putnam had the following entry placed in the orderly book, under date of May 31st, 1776:*

"Gen[l]. Washington has wrote to Gen[l]. Put-
"nam desiring him in the most pressing terms,
"to give positive orders to all colonels, to have
"Colours immediately completed for their
"respective regiments."

It would seem that the order of February 20th had been disregarded, at least in part, since Washington in writing to Putnam brings up again the subject of regimental colors. Evidently the subject of colors was in Washington's

* American Archives, 4th Series, Vol. VI, p. 637.

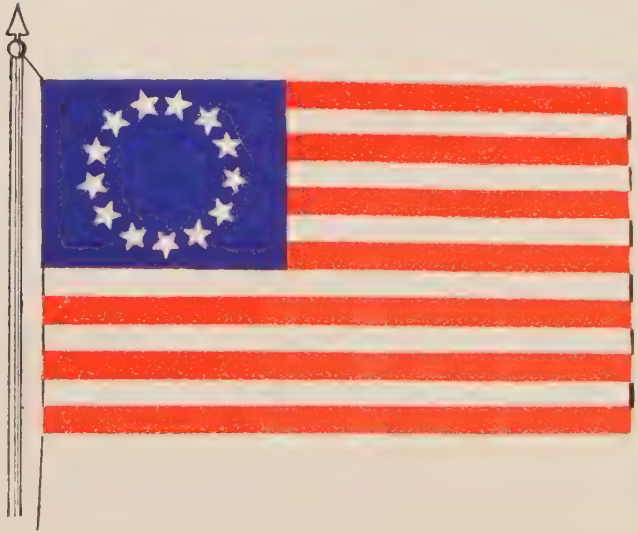
mind with special insistence just at this time, and it appears from his remark in regard to the delay of his business with Congress that he felt somewhat at leisure. That some of this comparative leisure was employed in consultation with members of Congress in regard to a new flag, and that the flag was designed and made during Washington's stay in Philadelphia, is made clear by the verbal account of the lady who was employed to make the sample of the new emblem. This lady was Elizabeth Ross, familiarly called Betsy, widow of John Ross, who had died in the preceding January as the result of an accident among some military stores which he was guarding on the wharf. She continued to make flags for about fifty years, and often told to her daughters and other assistants, and to her grandchildren, some of whom are still living, the story of the making of the first American Flag.

The story as told by the different hearers includes many particulars which vary more or less in the different versions, as might be expected in such a case. Omitting for the present all of these minor particulars, the main points of the story are these: Washington, accompanied by Robert Morris and George Ross, called at the little upholstery shop on Arch Street, where she was carrying on the business in which her husband and herself had been

engaged, and asked her if she could make a flag. She said that she had never made one, but that she could try. They thereupon produced a design, rather roughly drawn. She examined the design, and, noticing that the stars were six-pointed, suggested that they should be made with five points. The gentlemen agreed with her that five points would look better, but that the six-pointed star would be easier to make. She then showed them how a five-pointed star could be made with a single clip of the scissors. General Washington then and there changed the sketch, and the three gentlemen left. Soon after a new design was sent to her, colored by William Barrett, a painter of some note. She thereupon set to work to make the sample flag, which was soon completed and approved.

Mrs. Ross, afterward Mrs. Claypoole, in telling * the story of the first flag, always spoke of Robert Morris and George Ross as a committee of Congress. There is no record in the Journal of Congress of the appointment of such a committee, but as we have seen, Robert Morris was chairman of the "Secret Committee," and it is entirely possible that he and George Ross (who was an uncle of John Ross, the deceased husband

* See Appendix C for affidavits of the narrators of the Betsy Ross story, and Appendix B for biographical sketch of Betsy Ross.



American Flag of the Revolutionary Period.

of Betsy Ross) did call in an official capacity. Mrs. Claypoole said that the flag was made shortly before the Declaration of Independence, that it was adopted by Congress, and that her uncle, George Ross, commissioned her to make as many flags as she could and furnished the money to buy the bunting. It is a matter of common observation that in narrating events from memory it is easy to confuse dates and the sequence of events, unless they are fixed by other things happening at the same time. In this narrative repeated by those who heard it from Elizabeth Claypoole, it is probable that the time of the adoption of the flag and of the order to make flags is confused. The date of the making of the first flag is fixed by the condition "shortly before the Declaration." That was an event which Philadelphians did not forget or confuse. The time is also fixed by the condition, "while she was the widow of John Ross." She was married to Joseph Ashburn the day after the adoption of the flag resolution of June 14, 1777. If the flag received any indorsement from Congress in 1776 it must have been in secret session. The supposition that the flag had received some kind of official recognition receives support from the proceedings of Congress at the time of the Declaration of Independence in regard to a seal for the United States. A committee was appointed to

design a seal, but nothing was said about a flag, which suggests that that matter was already settled. This, however, is mere conjecture.

At the time when the flag was made, a month before the Declaration of Independence, there was still occasion for secrecy in such a matter as the designing of a new flag, whose use would be an avowal of independence. It is quite what we should expect, therefore, that Congress did not openly adopt the new flag in June, midway in time between the resolutions of May 15th and the Declaration. And at a time when so many matters of great moment were under consideration, it is not surprising that after the Declaration the matter of affirming a possible previous decision in regard to the flag should have been overlooked. The extremely small number of allusions to any flags in the letters and other writings of the period shows that flags were not a subject of much consideration or importance.

Washington's silence on the subject was probably due to his well-known modesty. He had in all probability an important part, perhaps the leading part, in designing both the flag of January, 1776, and that of June, 1776, which became the national ensign. In the only mention which he makes of the Cambridge flag, he says nothing about his own part in its adoption, and it would not be like him ever to call attention

to his share in the designing of the Stars and Stripes. In fact, it was not until a good many years after Washington's death that the flag became an object of great interest and enthusiasm on the part of Americans in general.

Another paper of interest in connection with Washington's visit to Philadelphia is the following letter* from John Hancock:—

"Philadelphia, June 3d. 1776.

"Sir:—I am extremely sorry it is not in my "power to wait upon you in person to execute "the command of Congress. But being de- "prived of this pleasure by a severe Fit of the "gout, I am under the Necessity of taking this "Method to acquaint you that Congress have "directed me in their Name to make the "thanks of that Body to you, for the unremit- "ted attention you have paid to your import- "ant Trust; and in particular for the Assist- "ance they have derived from your military "Knowledge and Experience in adopting the "best plans for the defence of the United "Colonies.

"To-morrow Morning I will do myself the "Honor of sending you all such Resolves of "Congress as anyways relate to the operations "of the ensuing Campaign.

"Having therefore fully accomplished the "views of Congress in requesting your attend-

* MS., Library of Congress.

"ance in this City, I am commanded to inform
"you that they submit to your choice the Time
"of returning to Head Quarters; well know-
"ing you will repair thither, whenever the
"Exigency of Affairs shall render your pres-
"ence there necessary.

"With the most ardent wishes, that you may
"be crowned with Success, equal to your Merit
"and the Righteousness of our Cause,
"I have the Honor to be with highest Esteem
and Regard,
"Sir, your most obd^{t}. and very hble Servt.
"JOHN HANCOCK, Presdt.

"His Excellency
Gen^{l}. Washington."

The disastrous battle of Long Island and the loss of New York occurred in August, and these reverses, making the success of the American cause very doubtful, may perhaps account for the slowness with which the new national flag found its way into use. Nothing is known in regard to the fate of the sample flag made about the first of June, 1776.

CHAPTER III.

USE OF THE STARS AND STRIPES DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

Two paintings by Revolutionary artists represent the new flag in use at the time of the battles about Trenton at the end of 1776. The earliest of these was painted about two years after the event by Charles Willson Peale. It is a portrait of Washington, representing him after the battle of Trenton. Peale was in command of a company at that battle, and therefore knew about it at first hand. His son, writing to a friend in 1872, as quoted in Preble's History, says:

"I have just had time to visit the Smithson-
"ian Institution to see the portrait of Wash-
"ington painted by my father, C. W. Peale,
"after the battle of Trenton. It is marked in
"his handwriting, 1779. The flag represented
"is a blue field with white stars arranged in a
"circle. I don't know that I ever heard my
"father speak of that flag, but the trophies at
"Washington's feet I know he painted from
"the flags then captured, and which were left
"with him for the purpose. He was always
"very particular in matters of historic record
"in his pictures; (the service sword in that
"picture is an instance, and probably caused

"its acceptance by Congress). . . . I have "no other authority, but feel assured that the "flag was *the* flag of our army at that time, "1779. My father commanded a company at "the batles of Germantown, Trenton, Prince-"ton, and Monmouth, and was a soldier as "well as a painter, and, I am sure, represented "the flag then in use, not a regimental flag, but "one to mark the new republic."*

The writer of this letter, Titian R. Peale, evidently supposed that the painting was done in the same year that the battle of Trenton was fought, for he says "the flag of our army at that time, 1779," evidently referring to the time of the event shown in the picture. The fact that the other flags in the picture were painted from the actual things, and Peale's presence at the battle make the presumption that the Stars and Stripes were used at Trenton very strong. The painting in question is now (1908) in one of the corridors of the Senate wing of the national Capitol. Only a small part of the flag is shown, including nine stars in a circular arrangement on a blue field. The remaining stars and the stripes are simply out of the picture.

The other painting is by John Trumbull, who as an aide-de-camp to Washington was present

* Letter to John A. McAllister, 1872. Preble's History, 2d ed. (1880), p. 272.

at the battles of Trenton and Princeton. It is a portrait of Washington before the battle of Princeton,* painted sixteen years after the event, in which is shown the American Flag, with its thirteen stars. The value of this evidence would be small if we knew the artist to be careless in regard to the truthfulness of detail in his historical paintings. But the reverse is true. He says of this painting that all the small things "down to the buttons and spurs were carefully painted from the different objects." As further illustrating his method we may cite the painting made in 1790 for the City of New York, now in the Mayor's office in the City Hall. It shows Broadway in ruins, with the Battery, "British ships leaving the shore, with the last officers and troops of the evacuating army; every part of the details of the dress, houses, furniture, etc., accurately copied from the real objects."

The date of the incident selected by Trumbull was January 2, 1777. C. C. Haven, in a paper read before the New Jersey Historical Society in January, 1872, says that a local tradition represents that the Stars and Stripes were first car-

* Trumbull, in his description of this picture, quoted in Appendix to Irving's "Life of Washington, ed. 1859, Vol. V, p. 340, calls it "Washington before the Battle of Trenton," but the context shows that he means the Battle of Princeton.

ried in battle in the fight at the Assunpink Creek, January 2, 1777. This supports the Trumbull painting, but obviously the tradition may be founded on the painting.

That the Stars and Stripes were not in use, nor generally recognized as the national flag during the summer and fall of 1776 is evident from the following extracts from the Pennsylvania Archives. (Vol. V, pages 13 and 46.) Captain William Richards, "store-keeper," approximately equivalent to quartermaster, writes to the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety under date of August 19th, 1776, "Gentlemen, I hope you have "agreed what sort of color I am to have made for "the galleys, &c., as they are much wanted." Again on October 15th, he writes, "Gentlemen, "the Commodore was with me this morning, and "says the fleet has not any colors to hoist if they "should be called to duty. It is not in my "power to get them done, until there is a design "to make the colors by."

Whether Captain Richards' repeated request produced any immediate result we have no means of knowing. In Vol. I of the Pennsylvania Archives, 2d series, page 164, occurs the following:—

"State Navy Board, May 29th, 1777. Pres-
"ent William Bradford, Joseph Marsh, Joseph
"Blewer, Paul Cox. An order on Wiliam

1777 June 13.

Saturday June 14. 1777

Resolved That an Order be drawn on the commissioners of the loan office for the state of Rhode Island in favour of David Rhea. & John Murray assignee of David Rhea for five thousand Dollars and charged to the account of colonel William Ramsay the same being in full agreeable to letter of advice from the Treasury Office of three bills N.S. 7. 12 drawn by J. Rutledge president of S. Carolina, dated Charles town 14 April 1777 in favour of Captain Ross and Co.

Ord. That another order be drawn on the said comrs. in favour of the said J Murray and charged to the account of Jos Trumbull esqr. commissary general the same being in full of his draught in favr. of the said J Murray dated Middle brook 9 June 1777 Agreeable to his letter of advice of the said date. of the 20 May

A letter from Amos Throop of Providence was read.

Ordered That it be referred to the marine committee.

Resolved That 300 dollars be advanced to capt Joseph Steel, 450 dollars to capt Matthew Irwin, and 500 dollars to capt Samuel Nearley for the use of their respective independant companies, they respectively, to be accountable

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Resolved That the marine committee be impowered to give such directions respecting the continental ships of war in the river Delaware as they think proper in case the enemy succeed in their attempts on the said River.

Resolved That the Flag of the united states be 13 stripes alternate red and white, that the Union be 13 stars white in a blue field representing a new constellation.

The Council of the state of Massachusetts bay having represented by letter to the president of Congress that capt John Roach sometime since appointed to command the continental ship of war the Ranger is a person of doubtful character and ought not to be intrusted with such a command. therefore

Resolved That captain Roach be suspended until the navy board for the eastern department shall have inquired fully into his character & report thereon to the marine committee.

Resolved That capt John Paul Jones be appointed to command the said ship Ranger.

Resolved That William Whipple esqr. member of Congress and of the marine committee John Langdon esqr. continental agent and the said capt John Paul Jones be authorized to appoint the lieutenant and other commissioned & warrant officers necessary for the said ship and that blank commissions

"Webb to Elizabeth Ross, for fourteen pounds,
"twelve shillings, two pence for making Ship's
"Colours, &c. put into William Richards'
"Store. £14, 12, 2."

Preble, in his history of the flag, suggests that these "ship's colours" might have been Pennsylvania State colors; but at that time Pennsylvania had no State colors, and none were adopted until many years later, so that it is extremely probable that the colors furnished by Elizabeth Ross included the new national ensign.

On June 14th, 1777, Congress finally entered on its journal an official endorsement of the Stars and Stripes, in a resolution worded as follows:

"Resolved, That the Flag of the United
"States be 13 Stripes alternate red and white,
"that the Union be 13 stars white in a blue
"field representing a new constellation."

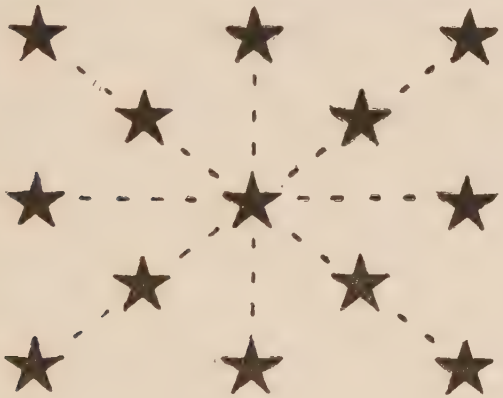
This resolution stands alone. There is nothing preceding or following it to show whether it was brought in as the report of a committee, or entered as the result of discussion on the floor of Congress. The photographic facsimile shows that the wording was changed twice in recording the resolution. First, the secretary, Charles Thomson, wrote, "Resolved That the Flag of the United States consist of." Then he erased the word *consist,* and wrote above it *be distinguished,*

and over the word *of* he wrote *by*, so as to make it read "be distinguished by 13 stripes," etc. Then he erased the words *distinguished by*, and left the words as quoted above. If the resolution had been handed in in writing as the report of a committee, it would hardly have been twice changed in recording it. The wording must have been framed as it was written down, whether by the secretary alone, or in consultation with others, cannot be determined.

The next matter on the record is the suspension of the captain who had been appointed to command the "Ranger," on information furnished by the Massachusetts Council, and the appointment of John Paul Jones to succeed him. It has been suggested with much show of reason that the two matters are really connected; that Congress realized the necessity for distinctive colors in sending out a ship of war, and so adopted the colors on the day on which the commander was appointed. The resolution immediately preceding that in relation to the flag also relates to ships of war. Altogether the resolution seems to be the belated official recognition of a fact already accomplished.*

* Some writers, notably the late Augustus C. Buell, in his "Life of John Paul Jones," couple the flag resolution with that appointing Jones to command the "Ranger," calling them one resolution. The facsimile here given

The resolution says nothing about the arrangement of the stars in the field. There is a tradition that in the first flag made the stars were placed as shown in the accompanying sketch, so that they outlined the two crosses which they replaced, as shown by the dotted lines in the



sketch. But it is also known that on some of the earlier flags the stars were arranged in a circle, and this form is given by both Trumbull and Peale in their paintings of Revolutionary scenes.

shows clearly that the resolutions are entirely distinct. John Paul Jones was a heroic figure in the history of the period, and his well-known devotion to the flag has inspired a number of romances connecting his name with various flags. To discuss even one of these at all fully would lead us far beyond the proper range of the present account.

Further evidence in regard to the arrangement of stars in flags of the Revolutionary period is to be found in a drawing reproduced (facing page 16) in a little book by Gaillard Hunt on the Great Seal of the United States, published by the Department of State in 1892. This is a proposed design for the Great Seal submitted by William Barton, of Philadelphia. One of the emblems displayed in it is "the ensign of the United States, proper," and this is shown on the drawing as a flag of 13 stripes with 13 stars in a circle. The date of the drawing is not accurately known, but Gaillard Hunt places it in 1782. It must at least have been previous to June 20th, 1782, for on that date the present great seal was adopted. In a previous design, of which no drawing * was made, also by Barton, one of the emblems is "the proper *standard* of the United States." This interchangeable use of "ensign" and "standard" suggests that they were used at that time in the same sense.

The newspapers of the day took no notice at the time of the resolution of June 14th; nor is there any mention of it in any letters, diaries or other writings of the time which have come to light. If we assume that the resolution refers to a flag which had for some months been gradu-

* Preble, page 687, 2d edition, gives the drawing of Barton's second design and the description of the first.

ally coming into use, this silent reception of the resolution becomes more intelligible. The fact that no contemporary notice of the resolution has come to light is, however, quite consistent with what we know in other ways of the general lack of interest in the subject of flags.

On the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, a great celebration was held in Philadelphia, with a dinner, naval demonstrations, military review, music, fireworks, and a general illumination. The *Pennsylvania Packet* of July 8th, 1777, in describing the celebration, says: "About noon all the armed ships and gallies in the river were drawn up before the city, dressed in the gayest manner, with the colours of the United States, and streamers displayed." This was three weeks after the flag resolution. There can be no reasonable doubt that the colors were the Stars and Stripes. And when we recall that this was only five weeks after the order by the Pennsylvania Naval Board to pay for "ship's colours," it seems probable that the decorations now displayed by the vessels in the river included those very colors for which payment had been ordered on May 29th. This probability is strengthened by the fact that the flag resolution of June 14th immediately follows one pertaining to the ships in the Delaware.

The next allusion to the national flag is more definite. It occurs in the narrative of Lieutenant William Digby, which has already been quoted from. He was serving under General Burgoyne at the time to which the passages quoted refer.

"1777, 30th of June. The advance corps "made their appearance before Ticonderoga. "We encamped at Three Mile Point. The Line "with the General were at Putnam's Creek, "about six miles in our rear, but expected "shortly up. We had a full view from our "Post of their works, lines, &c., and their flag "of Liberty displayed on the summit of their "fort. Our Gun boats were anchored across "the river out of the range of their Cannon." "At the engagement near Fort Ann (8th "July) Lieut. Col. Hill of the 9th Regiment "was attacked by the Americans more than "six times his number, but whom he repulsed "after a continued fire of three hours." "24th "July. We marched from Skeensborough, "and though but thirteen miles to Fort Ann, "were two days going it, as the Enemy had "felled large trees over the river." . . . "Fort "Ann is a place of no great strength, having "only a Blockhouse, which though strong "against small arms is not proof against Cannon. We saw many of their dead unburied "since the 8th. . . . At that action the 9th

"took their colours which were intended as a "present to their Colonel, Lord Leganeer" (*sic pro* Ligonier). "They were very handsome, "a Flag of the United States, 13 Stripes, alter- "nate red and white, (13 Stars white*) in a "blue field representing a new constellation."

Another account † says:

"The 9th regiment acquired during this ex- "pedition about thirty prisoners, some stores, "and baggage, and the colours of the Second "Hampshire Regiment." ‡

This account indicates that the Stars and Stripes were carried in battle as early as July 8th, 1777, and we may say that so far as now known this is the first *recorded* instance. The

* These words in parenthesis are omitted in the manuscript journal. The mention of a constellation makes it so evident that the flag was the Stars and Stripes that we are quite justified in believing the omission to be a lapse of the pen. In the resolution of Congress, whose wording the entry follows so closely, "in a blue field" comes directly after the word "white." The writer put them after the wrong "white." In the shape in which the passage stands in the manuscript it does not make sense, and the emendation printed above must, we think, appear entirely reasonable. For further particulars in regard to Lieutenant Digby's diary, see Appendix H, page 131.

† *Town and Country Magazine* for August, 1777, copied from the *London Gazette* extraordinary of August 15th.

‡ In "Regimental Colors in the Revolution," Gherardi Davis, privately printed, New York, 1907, are pictures of

"Flag of Liberty" of which Digby speaks was also, no doubt, the Stars and Stripes, since there would have been little opportunity for making or procuring other colors between the 30th of June, when the British appeared before Ticonderoga, and the 8th of July, when the battle took place. The testimony of Lieutenant Digby also makes it highly probable that the flags of the garrison of Ticonderoga were made before the passage of the resolution, since only sixteen days had elapsed since that event when the advancing British found the "Flag of Liberty" flying at Ticonderoga, more than three hundred miles from Philadelphia.

It seems that the change from the Grand Union flag to the flag with stars was not generally regarded as a matter of importance, or even as much of a change. The field with the thirteen stripes was the most conspicuous part of each, and we find repeated allusions to each flag in which the stripes only are mentioned. There are also a number of instances in which it is impossible to tell which is meant.

The next well-authenticated instance of the use

two colors said to be the identical flags captured in this action. They are now in the possession of Col. George W. Rogers, Wykeham, Burgess Hill, Sussex, England. They are of silk, about 5 feet by 5 feet, 6 inches in size, one blue and one buff, with various designs and inscriptions.

of the flag in the war was at Fort Schuyler, or, as it is often called, Fort Stanwix. This fort was on the site of the present city of Rome, at the head of navigation on the Mohawk. Its old name had been Fort Stanwix, but it had recently been repaired and renamed Fort Schuyler, when the British laid siege to it with a motley force of regulars, Royalists and Indians. The beleaguered garrison had not been provided with a United States Flag, and they made haste to make one out of such materials as could be procured. All accounts agree that the blue field was made from the cloak of Captain Swartwout and the red stripes from the petticoat of a soldier's wife. Some accounts say that the white stripes were made of ammunition bags, and some say of shirts. At all events there is no doubt that they made a flag, and the following extract from a contemporary manuscript gives us the date. The diary of William Colbraith, kept during the siege, has, under date of August 3d, 1777, this entry:*

"Early this morning a Continental Flagg made by the Officers of Col. Gansevoort's Regiment was hoisted and a Cannon Levelled at the Enemies Camp was fired on the Occasion." In the sortie of August 6th a quantity of spoils were captured. The same writer says: "Four Colours

* Copy furnished to George Canby by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, in whose possession the manuscript was.

were also taken and Immediately hoisted on our Flag Staff under the Continental Flagg as Trophies of Victory." The writer of the diary uses the word Continental, from habit. Of course he should have called it the flag of the United States.

A further confirmation of this story is found in an extant letter of Capt. Swartwout, addressed to Colonel Gansevoort.

"Poughkeepsie, 29th August, 1778.

"Dear Sir, The great distance which our "duty calls us appart obliges me at this time "to give you this trouble, which otherwise I "would not.

"You may remember agreeable to your order "I was to have an Order for Eight Yards of "Broad Cloath, on the Commissary for Cloath-"ing of this State. In lieu of my Blue Cloak, "which was used for Colours at Fort Schuyler.

"An opportunity now presenting itself, I "beg you to send me an Order inclosed to Mr. "Jeremiah Renseler, Pay Master at Albany, "where I will receive it, and you will oblige "me—who will always acknowledge the same "with true gratitude.

"Please to make my Comp'ts to the other "officers of the regiment.

"I am Dear Sir

"Your Hble Serv't

"ABRAHAM SWARTWOUT, Captain.

"Colonel Peter Ganseworth."

This letter is now in possession of Mrs. Abraham Lansing, Albany, N. Y.

It is quite likely that the garrison of Fort Schuyler knew that Fort Ticonderoga had the new flag, but nothing was said about it in the writings of the time thus far discovered in this country, so that it was soon forgotten. The flag of Fort Schuyler, however, on account of the peculiar circumstances attending its history, was mentioned in letters and diaries of the time, and also talked about in the traditions of the place where it was made and used, so that it was not forgotten. Under the name of the Fort Stanwix Flag, it has been regarded by many careful writers as the first American Flag ever used in war. Some have even gone so far as to call it the first American Flag ever made. The paintings of Trumbull and Peale make it probable that the flag had been in use in Washington's army since the beginning of 1777, and Lieutenant Digby's diary shows that the garrison of Ticonderoga had it at least a month before the investment of Fort Schuyler. It is to be hoped that as the Revolutionary manuscripts in this country and England are more and more carefully studied, new light will be thrown on the early history of the use of the Stars and Stripes.

In *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet, or the Gen-*

eral Advertizer of Tuesday, September 2d, 1777, we find the following brief advertisement:—

"In Congress June 14th. 1777—

"*Resolved,*—That the Flag of the United "States be thirteen Stripes, alternate red and "white, that the Union be thirteen Stars, "white, on a blue field representing a new con- "stellation.

"Extracted from the minutes, Charles Thomson "Secretary."

This was printed in the same column with other resolutions and Congressional proceedings of the latter part of August. The recent proceedings are followed by the words "Published by order of Congress, Charles Thomson, Secretary." Whether this difference in stating authority for the extracts has any significance or not does not appear, but it is at least curious that the delay should have occurred. We have seen that the resolution itself was delayed, the flag having been in existence for a year, and now we find the publication of the resolution delayed, for what reason we cannot determine. That the adoption of the flag was known long before this publication, is shown by the contemporary account of the making of the flag at Fort Schuyler.

Exactly the same resolutions and proceedings as the foregoing were published in the *Pennsyl-*

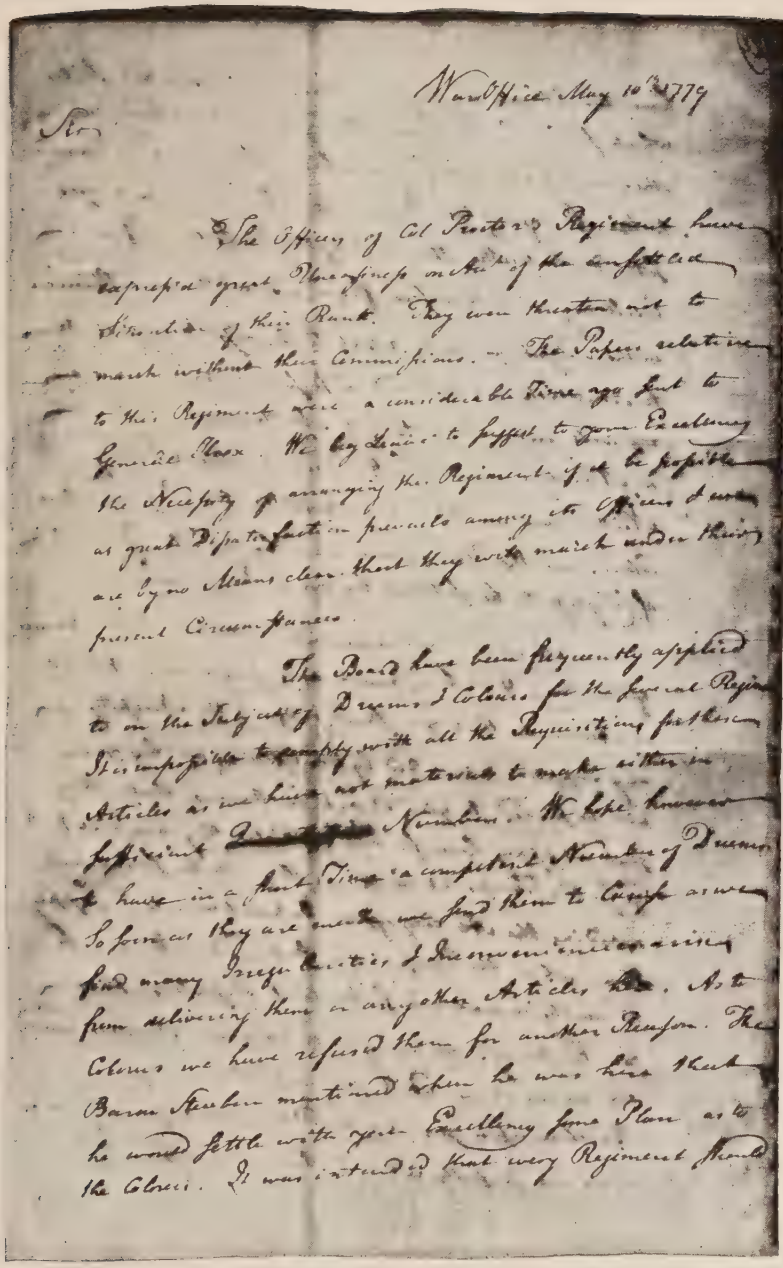
vania Gazette the next day, September 3d, 1777. The *Gazette* was a weekly. The proceedings of Congress were not entirely secret, and some of their decisions became known to the people near at hand before they were published. Preble, in a note on this point in his "History of the Flag," says that a certain surgeon of the army wrote in his diary under date of August 3d that it appeared by the papers that Congress had resolved on the 14th of June last that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, etc. He may have heard the report and supposed that it had been in the papers; or it may have been in some paper.

It has been assumed by many persons that the publication of the flag resolution on September 2d, 1777, was the first information which the public had received in regard to the new flag. This seems to be the reason why it has been claimed that the skirmish at Cooch's Bridge, in Delaware, was the first engagement in which the Stars and Stripes were displayed. The date of this engagement was September 3d, 1777, and it may be freely granted that it was the first engagement in which the present American Flag could have been carried *after it had been publicly proclaimed as the national flag.* A monument was unveiled on this ground, with appropriate ceremonies, on September 3d, 1901.

It has been claimed by several writers that the first appearance of the Stars and Stripes in battle was on September 11th, 1777, at the Battle of Brandywine. Here we might amend by saying, "the first time the flag could have been used in a pitched battle after the publication of the resolution by which it had been adopted by Congress." There seems no doubt that the flag was used at the surrender of Burgoyne, October 17th, 1777, as Trumbull's painting of the surrender shows an American Flag with the stars in a circle.

Irving in his life of Washington quotes from the letters of a Hessian officer some interesting description of the citizen soldiery who received the submission of the captured British and Hessians. "There were regular regiments also," he said, "which for want of time and cloth, were not yet equipped in uniform. These had standards with various emblems and mottoes, some of which had for us a very satirical signification."

That the flag was not immediately and universally distributed in the naval service is evident from a letter of an officer on the Privateer Cumberland, published in *Potter's American Monthly,* 1876, Vol. VI, p. 34. This letter, written early in 1779, says they had no national colors. That the army was not generally supplied with the national flag at the same period may be



War Office May 10th 1779

Sr

The Officers of Col Proctor's Regiment have represented great Hardships in Relation to the unsettled Situation of their Rank. They were therefore sent to march without their Commissions. — The Papers relating to this Regiment were a considerable Time ago sent to General Knox. We beg Leave to suggest to your Excellency the Necessity of arranging the Regiment if it be possible as great Dissatisfaction prevails among its Officers & men are by no Means clear that they will march under their present Circumstances.

The Board have been frequently applied to on the Subject of Drummers & Colours for the several Regiments. It is impossible to comply with all the Requisitions for these Articles as we have not materials to make either in sufficient Quantities. We hope however to have in a short Time a competent Number of Drums & Colours. So far as they are made we shall think it our Duty to comply as we find many Regiments destitute of Drums & Colours. We have no Objection to delivering them on any other Articles than. As to Colours we have refused them for another Reason. The Baron Steuben mentioned when he was here that he would settle with your Excellency some Plan as to the Colours. It was intended that every Regiment should

Facsimile Letter from the Board of War to General Washington.

have two Colours one the Standard of the United States which should be the same throughout the Army & the other a Regimental Colour which should vary accord to the facings of the Regiments. But it is not yet settled what is the Standard of the U States. If your Excellency will therefore favour us with your Opinion on the Subject we will report to Congress & request them to establish a Standard & Form as this is done we will endeavour to get Materials & make a Number made sufficient for the Army. Neither can we take what should be the Regimental Colours or the Uniforms, were by a late Resolution of Congress to be settled by your Excellency.

As we are not acquainted with the Circumstance of the Army & it being much more proper on a Variety of Occasions that you should judge of the Necessity of any Supplies demanded by the Officers, we beg you will be pleased to give it out in Orders that they shall not apply here for any Articles they are in Need of for the Troops at Camp as they will be furnished according the Ability of the Department to supply them where the Troops are stationed. We are so generally importuned for particular Supplies that your Excellency's complying with the above Request would ease us much — But if it will throw a greater Burthen upon you we would not wish you to do it as we are perfectly willing to share your Difficulties

Facsimile Letter from the Board

on this or any other Occasion. Large Demands and small Means of satisfying them are distressing as well to the Officers who are too frequently incapable of granting their Requests as well from the Scantiness of our Stores as from a Conviction of the Impropriety of detaining them here. Troops on their Way to Camp & Recruits we always supply but least with so many Articles as will enable them to join the Army.

We have the Honour to be
with the greatest Respect
Your very obedient Servants
Richard Peters
By Order

His Excellency
The Comm. in Chief

ar to General Washington.

fairly inferred from the following letter, on file among the manuscripts in the Library of Congress. Washington was at this time at Middlebrook, New Jersey, where the army was encamped during a large part of the year. The War Office was in Philadelphia, whither Congress had returned the previous summer after its evacuation by the British.

"War Office May 10th 1779

"Sir:—The Officers of Col Proctor's Regi-
"ment have express'd great Uneasiness on
"Acc't of the unsettled Situation of their
"Rank. They even threaten not to march
"without their Commissions. The Papers rel-
"ative to this Regiment were a considerable
"Time ago sent to General Knox. We beg
"Leave to suggest to your Excellency the
"Necessity of arranging this Regiment if it be
"possible as great Dissatisfaction prevails
"among its Officers & we are by no Means
"clear that they will march under their pres-
"ent Circumstances.

"The Board have been frequently applied to
"on the Subject of Drums & Colours for the
"several Regiments. It is impossible to com-
"ply with all the Requisitions for these
"Articles as we have not materials to make
"either in sufficient Numbers. We hope how-
"ever to have in a short Time a competent
"Number of Drums. So soon as they are made

"we send them to Camp, as we find many
"Irregularities & Inconveniencies arise from
"delivering them or any other Articles here.
"As to Colours we have refused them for
"another Reason. The Baron Steuben men-
"tioned when he was here that he would settle
"with your Excellency some Plan as to the
"Colours. It was intended that every Regi-
"ment should have two Colours—one the
"Standard of the United States which should
"be the same throughout the Army, & the
"other a Regimental Colour which should
"vary according to the facings of the Regi-
"ments. But it is not yet settled what is the
"Standard of the U. States. If your Excel-
"lency will therefore favor us with your
"Opinion on the Subject we will report to Con-
"gress & request them to establish a Standard
"& so soon as this is done we will endeavor
"to get Materials and order a Number made
"sufficient for the Army. Neither can we
"tell what should be the Regimental Colours,
"as the Uniforms were by a late Resolution of
"Congress to be settled by your Excellency.

"As we are not acquainted with the Circum-
"stances of the Army & it being much more
"proper on a variety of Accounts that you
"should judge of the Necessity of any Supplies
"demanded by the Officers, we beg you will be
"pleased to give it out in Orders that they
"shall not apply here for any Articles they are

"in Need of for the Troops at Camp as they
"will be furnished according to the Ability of
"the Departments to supply them where the
"Troops are stationed. We are so frequently
"importuned for partial Supplies that your
"Excellency's complying with the above
"Request would ease us much. But if it will
"throw a greater Burthen upon you we would
"not wish you to do it, as we are perfectly will-
"ing to share your Difficulties on this or any
"other Occasion. Large Demands and small
"Means of satisfying them are distressing as
"well to the Officers as to us who are too fre-
"quently incapable of granting their Requests
"as well from the Scantiness of our Stores as
"from a Conviction of the Impropriety of
"delivering them here. Troops on their Way
"to Camp & Recruits we always supply at
"least with so many Articles as will enable
"them to join the Army.

"We have the Honour to be
"with the greatest Respect
"your very obedient Servants.
"RICHARD PETERS.
"By Order.

"His Excellency
"The Comr in Chief."

The bearing of this letter on the history of the flag is indeed difficult to determine. It would seem to indicate that Congress had taken no

action on the subject of a standard, since we may fairly presume that the Board of War, a body created by Congress, would be likely to know what provisions had been made in matters pertaining to their department. It appears that the only way to reconcile this letter with the resolution of June 14th, 1777, is to suppose that the words "flag" in the resolution and "standard" here relate to different things.* The flag resolution was passed on the same day that a number of naval matters were under consideration, and it is conceivable that the Board of War supposed the flag of thirteen stripes and thirteen stars to be intended for naval use only. The several instances already mentioned show that it had been used in a number of places on land, but the very fact that the Board of War was besieged with requests for colors in May, 1779, is evidence that the army was not at that time generally supplied with them. We must receive with caution the statements † of Preble and others that the Stars and Stripes were without doubt used at the battles of Brandywine and Germantown, September and October, 1777, unless they are backed

* The interchangeable use of *ensign* and *standard*, mentioned on page 60, both referring to the flag, suggests that this explanation is not admissible.

† Preble, 2d Edition, p. 277. Harrison, 1st Edition, p. 64.

up by definite evidence. Inferences are easily made, but we must not call them history, however ingenious and reasonable they may be.

The fact that William Richards* did not know in October, 1776, what design was to be followed in making flags for the vessels in the Delaware has been held to prove not only that Congress had not adopted a design, but that a sample flag had not been made in June of the same year. This letter shows that such reasoning is without force, since an application of the same logic here would lead us to suppose that there was no national flag in May, 1779. Altogether it seems reasonable to conclude that the Board of War were mistaken. They say in the letter that they are not acquainted with the circumstances of the army; probably if they had been so acquainted they would have discovered that some regiments were provided with the flag of stars and stripes. It is gratifying to learn that the Board were so ready to share Washington's burdens, and their reference to irregularities and inconveniences sound like the experience of modern administrators in handling public supplies.

It is difficult to determine just who constituted the Board of War at any given time. The Journal of Congress contains many resolutions

* See page 56.

appointing new members, but in most instances does not say whether they are additional members or to replace others who have resigned. The Board was organized June 12th, 1776, and the five members chosen the next day were: John Adams, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Harrison, James Wilson and Edward Rutledge. There had been nine appointments between this date and July 18th, 1777, when the board was reorganized, three persons not members of Congress being added. Richard Peters was secretary of the Board when it was organized, but there appears to have been at least one other secretary between that time and the date of the letter, when Richard Peters* was again secretary, apparently. So many changes had taken place in the membership of the Board that it is not impossible that at the meeting which framed the letter of May 10th, 1779, no one recalled the action of Congress of June 14th, 1777, adopting the Stars and Stripes. That action seems to have made very little impression at the time. If the Board had the flag of thirteen stripes and thirteen stars in mind, it is at least surprising that the letter does not mention it when speaking of a "U. States standard."

* Richard Peters was a Philadelphian. Belmont Mansion, Fairmount Park, was his residence. See Cyclopedia of American Biography, Vol. XII.

A surgeon in the British service,* under date of April 3d, 1780, at Charleston, S. C., writes:—

"Their great battery fronting Charleston "harbor had the American flag of thirteen "stripes displayed. This, up to this day, had "been a blue flag with field and thirteen stars. "The other flag never hoisted until to-day."

The history of the Stars and Stripes at sea, so far as can now be determined, begins with the sailing of the *Ranger,* under command of John Paul Jones from Portsmouth,† N. H., on November 1st, 1777. Jones says, in a letter ‡ to the Naval Committee of Congress, dated February 22d, 1778, that the American flag received on the 14th of that month the first salute from a French admiral. The most celebrated sea fight of the Revolutionary War was the action between the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Serapis,* on September 23d, 1779. The British vessel surrendered, but soon after the flag-ship of Jones, the *Bon Homme Richard*, sank. It is said § that the flag of the *Richard* was saved and transferred to the captured vessel, and afterward to the

* Dr. John Jeffries, of Boston. See Preble, p. 284, 2d Edition.

† P. D. Harrison, pp. 114 et seq. 1st Edition, 1906.

‡ See "Life of Paul Jones," Mackenzie, Boston, 1841, Vol. I, p. 55.

§ Preble, p. 282, 2d Edition.

Alliance, another of the American vessels. During the battle between the *Richard* and the *Serapis,* the flag of the former was said to have been shot away, and rescued by a young man named James Bayard Stafford. In 1784 a flag was sent to Stafford, as specified in the following letter:*

"Phila Monday December 13th 1784.

"James Bayard Stafford

"Sir:—I am directed by the Marine Com-
"mittee to inform you that on last Thursday
"the 9th they decided to bestow upon you for
"your meritorious services thro the late war—
"'Paul Jones' Starry Flag of the Bon Homme
"Richard which was transferred to the Alli-
"ance,' a boarding sword of said ship & a mus-
"quet captured from the Serapis.
"If you write to Captain John Brown at the
"yard, what ship you wish them sent by to
"N. Y. they will be forwarded to you.

Your humble servt.

JAMES MEYLER,

"Secretary Pro. tem."

The flag thus bestowed had thirteen stripes and but twelve stars. It was of English bunting, about three and one-half by five feet in size. It was kept in the Stafford family as a precious

* See Preble, 2d Edition, p. 281, for facsimile of this letter, and p. 282 picture of the flag.

relic. A daughter of the original recipient dying about 1880 bequeathed it to a brother. This flag was exhibited at the great Sanitary Fair (in aid of the soldiers) in Philadelphia in 1864, and on various other occasions since. In 1898 it was presented to the nation through President McKinley.

It will be observed that in the letter written to Stafford by the secretary pro tem. of the Marine Committee, the words describing the flag are enclosed in quotation marks, as if the writer wished to disclaim any responsibility for the correctness of the description. The fact that the flag is so small has been taken as an evidence that it was never the ensign of a war vessel. Altogether, it can scarcely be regarded as certain that this flag was that of the *Bon Homme Richard*, but it is reasonably certain that it is a flag of the revolutionary period, and one of the very few which have come down to us. (See note, page 98.)

In a book on "Regimental Colors in the Revolution," by Gherardi Davis, privately printed in New York in 1907, in a supplement dated 1908, is a picture of a flag said to have been carried at the battle of Cowpens. This flag is preserved in the flag-room in the Capitol of Maryland at Annapolis. It is five feet long and thirty-two inches wide; has thirteen stripes and thirteen

stars, twelve in a nearly circular ring and one in the center.

This flag was presented to the State of Maryland on October 19th, 1907, by the Society of the War of 1812. A pamphlet was shortly afterward issued by the Adjutant General of the State, General Riggs, in which is given the history of each flag displayed in the flag-room of the Capitol. In this pamphlet the date of the battle of Cowpens is wrongly given as January, 1778, instead of 1781, and one or two other inaccurate statements are made.

In February, 1908, a letter from William N. Batchelor appeared in the *Baltimore American*, casting doubt on the authenticity of the flag. The Baltimore Society of the War of 1812 then appointed one of its members, J. Appleton Wilson, to investigate the matter. The statement in the pamphlet in regard to the "Cowpens Flag" says it was carried by William Batchelor at the battle of Cowpens, and by his son, William Batchelor, at the battle of North Point, September 12th, 1814. William N. Batchelor has in his possession the flag carried by his grandfather, William Batchelor, at the battle of North Point, but it appears that the Cowpens flag was carried by Joshua F. Batchelor, a brother of the second William, at the battle of North Point. It will

be observed that the number of stars and stripes on the flag assign it to the period previous to 1795, when the number of stars and stripes was increased to fifteen, unless it were a modern fraud made to imitate an old flag. The supposition that it is a fraud is precluded by its known history, as will appear. J. Appleton Wilson consulted the records of the War Department, and the archives of the State of Maryland, and found that William Batchelor was a member of the Third Maryland Regiment at the time of the battle of Cowpens, and this supports the statement that he carried the flag at that battle. He also found that the minutes of a meeting of the Old Defenders' Association, held in August, 1843, contain the following entry:

> "Wm. Batchelor" (with "Joshua F." written in front of it) "ensign of the 27th Regi-
> "ment (Md.), presented to the Society the bat-
> "tle flag of that Regiment, which was also the
> "battle-flag of the 3d Regiment (Small-
> "wood's), which was carried by his father,
> "William Batchelor, color sergeant in that
> "regiment, who carried it through the fight at
> "Cowpens, in which engagement he was
> "wounded, returned home, and died December
> "10th, 1781. The flag was left in his custody,
> "and to be carried by him in the celebrations
> "of this Association."

Mr. Wilson finds that Joshua F. Batchelor was ensign of Captain Schwartzauer's Company of the 27th Regiment at the battle of North Point, and believes that he carried this flag at that battle and presented it to the Association. In support of this he quotes from a letter written in 1902 to P. D. Harrison, of Manchester, N. H., author of "The Stars and Stripes and Other American Flags." This letter is from Dr. Hadel, a member of the Society of the War of 1812, who had specially studied the history of this flag. After stating that the flag was carried at the battle of Cowpens by William Batchelor, he says:

"The flag became the property of his son, "Joshua F. Batchelor, ensign of the 7th Com- "pany, Captain Daniel Schwarzhauer, 27th "Regiment of Infantry, Colonel Kennedy Long, "of the Maryland Militia. Ensign Batchelor "carried the flag through the battle of North "Point, where it was cut in many places by "British bullets. After the war it was car- "ried by Ensign Batchelor annually on the "12th of September. He presented the flag "to the Society of the War of 1812, in whose "keeping it is to remain forever.

"The flag was borne in procession when "Lafayette was welcomed in 1824, and was "carried by myself as a member of the Sons "of the American Revolution, on October 19th, "1901, at the dedication of the monument

"erected by that Society to the heroes of the "American Revolution. The material of the "flag is bunting, it being five feet six inches "in length and two feet seven inches wide. "The flag is in a fair state of preservation, al- "though plainly showing the holes made by "bullets. It is annually, on September 12th, "thrown over the back of the President's "chair, and is given the place of honor on all "occasions."

It thus seems fairly well established that the flag displayed at Annapolis is a genuine Revolutionary relic. J. Appleton Wilson also examined the flag in possession of William N. Batchelor, of Baltimore, before referred to, which his grandfather, William Batchelor the second, carried at the battle of North Point. It is a silk flag, with 13 stripes, very much worn and slit, and has been sewed to a backing of cambric. The flag was so much folded in sewing it to the cambric that Mr. Wilson could not decide how many stars there were or had been. The blue of the union has faded to a cream white. The number of stripes on this flag refers it to the period before 1795, and it is not at all unlikely that it too is as old as the later years of the Revolutionary War.

For the foregoing particulars from the report of J. Appleton Wilson on the Cowpens Flag, the

writer is indebted to Colonel H. M. Hutton, Assistant Adjutant General of Maryland.

The slowness with which the flag spread over the country is shown by the fact that when the news of peace was received the following notice was printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* (April 23d, 1783):

"Philadelphia, April 23. Last Wednesday "the Sheriff, accompanied by the magistrates "of the city, made Proclamation, at the Court "House, of the cessation of Hostilities, amidst "a vast concourse of People, who expressed "their Satisfaction on the happy Occasion by "repeated Shouts. At the same Time the "State Flag was hoisted on Market Street "Wharff, the Bells were rung, and a general "Joy diffused itself throughout the City."

And after other items of *news* occurs the following in the same column:

"In Congress, June 14th 1777.

"Resolved, that the flag of the Thirteen "United States be Thirteen Stripes, alternate "Red and White; That the Union be Thirteen "Stars, White in a Blue Field, representing a "new Constellation.

"CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.

"The Printers in the several States are re- "quested to insert the above Resolution in

"their respective News-papers, in order that "the same may be generally known."

And in the same column is the following:

"At a meeting of a great number of the "respectable inhabitants of Pittsgrove and "towns adjacent in Salem County, State of "New Jersey, for the Celebration of Peace, "the day was introduced with raising a monu- "ment of great height, on which was displayed "the ensign of Peace, with the thirteen "Stripes; after which the militia were drawn "up, and discharged a *feu de joy* of thirteen "rounds, when the Company partook of a "cheerful Colation."

It is pretty certain that the expression "State Flag," as used in the *Gazette*, means the flag of the United States. There was no Pennsylvania State flag at that time, and the republication of the Congressional resolution in the same column tends to show that the flag there described is the one referred to in the news item.

In the memoir of John Fanning Watson in the third volume of "Watson's Annals," occurs the following statement attributed to him:

*"I was born in the stirring times of the "Revolutionary War, on the 13th of June, "1779. My mother, wishing to identify me

* Watson's "Annals," Vol. III, p. 1.

" with the scenes of the Revolution, when the
" Flag of Peace was hoisted on Market Street
" hill, held me up in her arms and made me see
" and notice that flag, so that it should be told
" by me in after years, she at the same time
" shedding many tears of joy at the glad spec-
" tacle."

It is certainly surprising that it should have been thought necessary to republish the flag resolution in 1783, but if any notice were necessary, it seems at least to have been effective, for there are many accounts from all parts of the country of the raising of flags to commemorate the return of peace. From this circumstance, the flag was called " the Flag of Peace " in many writings of the time. And such it was in the years which followed, during which the trading vessels of the young republic carried the Stars and Stripes all over the world.

(Note, May, 1917.) Only one flag of the revolutionary period has come to the notice of the writer since 1909. It belonged to Mr. J. L. M. Dufour, of Bound Brook, N. J., and has been in his family since Revolutionary times. It has thirteen stars in 3 rows, 4, 5 and 4. It was probably a naval flag, but no definite evidence has been found that it was carried during the Revolutionary War.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FLAG SINCE THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

The ensign of the United States of America remained the same, as fixed by the resolution of June 14th, 1777, until 1795. By this time Vermont and Kentucky had been admitted into the Union, and on January 13th, 1794, Congress passed the following act:

> "That from and after the first day of May, "1795, the flag of the United States be fifteen "stripes, alternate red and white; that the "union be fifteen stars, white in a blue field."

The flag thus established remained in use until 1818. During this period occurred the war with Great Britain, commonly called the war of 1812. It was during this war that "The Star Spangled Banner" was written by Francis Scott Key. He was at the time* aide-de-camp to General Smith, who was in charge of the defense of Baltimore. Key had gone on board the flag-ship of the enemy's fleet under a flag of truce to endeavor to secure the exchange of one of his friends who had been taken prisoner by the British. Admiral Cockburn detained them a day and a night, be-

* See Preble, 2d Edition, pp. 722-723.

cause he was about to attack Fort McHenry. The flag which inspired the poem had then recently been made for the fort by Mrs. Mary Pickersgill. The flag is still in existence, having passed from Lieutenant-Colonel Armstead, who was in command of the fort at the time of the bombardment, to his daughter, Mrs. Appleton, and at her death, in New York, July 25th, 1878, to her son, Mr. Eben Appleton, of Yonkers, N. Y. (See page 98.)

A letter from Mrs. Caroline Purdy, of Baltimore, to Mrs. Appleton, contains interesting particulars in regard to this flag. The letter is quoted* in Preble's "History of the Flag."

"It was made by my mother, Mrs. Mary "Pickersgill, and I assisted her. My grand-"mother, Rebecca Young, made the first flag "of the Revolution, under General Washing-"ton's direction, and for this reason my "mother was selected by Commodore Barry "and General Striker (family connections) to "make this Star Spangled Banner, being an "exceedingly patriotic woman. The flag being "so very large, my mother was obliged to ob-"tain permission from the proprietors of Clag-"get's brewery, which was in our neighbor-"hood, to spread it out in their malt house, "and I remember seeing my mother down on "the floor placing the stars. After the comple-

* P. 733, 2d Edition.

"tion of the flag, she superintended the top-
"ping (*i. e.*, heading) of it, having it fastened
"in the most secure manner, to prevent its
"being torn away by balls. The wisdom of her
"precautions was shown during the engage-
"ment, many shots piercing it, but it still
"remained firm to the staff. Your father, Col.
"Armstead, declared that no one but the
"maker of the flag should mend it, and sug-
"gested that the rents should be bound
"around. . . . The flag I think contained four
"hundred yards of bunting, and my mother
"worked many nights until twelve o'clock to
"complete it in a given time."

Rebecca Young, spoken of in the letter, made flags in Philadelphia at a very early period, as is shown by the advertisement copied below, which is from a number of the *Advertizer* for sometime in 1780. It may also be true that she made flags under General Washington's direction, but the account given in Chapter II and supported by the affidavits in the appendix seems to show conclusively that the first flag *with stars* was the one made by Mrs. Ross.

The advertisement * referred to is as follows:

* The writer has not found this advertisement but a copy in the hand-writing of George Canby assures him that there is such an advertisement in one of the Philadelphia papers of the period.

"COLOURS

"for the Army and Navy made and sold on the
"most reasonable terms

"By REBECCA YOUNG

"in Walnut Street near Third Street, and next
"door but one to Mr. Samuel McLane's.

"N. B. Any person having Bunting for Sale
"may hear of a purchaser by applying as
"above."

In 1818 a further change was made in the United States Flag. By this time five additional States had been admitted: Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, and Mississippi. It was seen that if the number of stripes was increased with each increase in the number of States, the distinctness of the stripes when seen from a distance would be impaired. Reverence for the banner under which the heroes of the Revolution had fought also influenced the general sentiment toward a return to the thirteen stripes. The act passed April 4th, 1818, provides, first,

"That from and after the 4th day of July
"next, the flag of the United States be thirteen
"horizontal stripes, alternate red and white;
"that the union have twenty stars, white in a
"blue field."

Second,

"That on the admission of every new state "into the Union, one star be added to the "union of the flag, and that such addition shall "take effect on the 4th of July next succeeding "such admission."

This bill was brought forward by Representative Peter H. Wendover, of New York, but the plan is the suggestion of Captain Samuel C. Reid, who had distinguished himself as a sea-fighter under the Stars and Stripes. Early in 1859 a committee of Congress was appointed to consider the propriety of presenting to Captain Reid the thanks of Congress as the designer of the new form of the flag. This committee, on February 5th, 1859, reported their conclusion that Captain Reid was the undoubted author of the suggestion embodied in the law of 1818, and they included in their report a brief history of the changes which had already taken place in the flag. The resolution of thanks to Captain Reid was accordingly passed.

The first flag of the new design* to be made was hoisted over the hall of the House of Representatives on April 13th, 1818. It was made at the expense of Captain Reid for the purpose, and he declined to send in a bill for it. He had recommended that the bill reëstablishing the flag

* Preble, 2d Edition, p. 344.

should designate the manner of arranging the stars in the field. He suggested that the flag for merchant ships should have the stars arranged in one large star, and that for war vessels should have its stars arranged in parallel rows. It is said that the flag furnished by Captain Reid for

the hall of Congress had the stars arranged in a large star. It will be noticed that this number of stars lends itself very well to such an arrangement (and a twenty-first could be added in the middle), but as soon as the number was enlarged beyond twenty-one, the symmetry of the large star would have been marred.

It is generally considered that the omission from the bill of 1818 of any provision in regard to the arrangement of the stars was a mistake. It has resulted in the past in a great variety of arrangements being adopted. Since the number of stars has become so large, their arrangement in a large star would be impracticable, since the individual stars would have to be very small in order to get them into such a design. In fact, the problem of arrangement has practically solved itself, because, with so many stars to be inserted, the only feasible way is to put them symmetrically all over the field, or as nearly symmetrically as possible. The arrangement ordered by the regulations of the Army and Navy departments is now generally observed in the making of flags for any purpose. The forty-six stars which now adorn the union of the flag are arranged in horizontal rows, but not in rows vertically.

By the time the Mexican war came on, the flags carried by the army and navy of the United States had twenty-nine stars. Many banners are preserved which saw service in the battles of that war.

At the beginning of 1861 the number of stars in the union of the old Flag had increased to thirty-four, and it was such a flag which at Fort Sumter was fired upon by the secessionists on

April 12th, 1861. The hauling down of the flag from Fort Sumter was hailed with acclamations throughout the South, and served to unite the North in enthusiastic determination to defend the flag which had thus suffered at the hands of its former friends. The demand for flags throughout the North was unprecedented. Everywhere the Stars and Stripes were displayed. Even from church steeples in many places the beloved emblem of the Union floated. The Northern people had differed in regard to the propriety of coercing the South, but the assault on the flag hushed nearly all voices of protest, and the whole North rose up. Deepest sorrow and indignation were manifest everywhere, and so universal was the resolution to avenge the insult to the old Flag, that to be a "peace man" was held almost equivalent to being a traitor.

One of the most popular sayings of the time was taken from a telegraphic message* sent by Secretary of the Treasury John A. Dix to William H. Jones, who had been sent to Mobile and New Orleans to try to save the revenue cutters at those ports. He found that at Mobile already in possession of the Confederates, and on reaching New Orleans he found that the captain in com-

* See Preble, 2d Edition, p. 399, facsimile of original of this message.

mand of the cutter there refused to surrender the boat to the Department. Jones telegraphed to General Dix for instructions, and the reply which was sent him directed him to take possession of the boat, placing the recalcitrant captain under arrest. The telegram ended with the words, "If any one attempts to haul down the American Flag, shoot him on the spot." The telegram was withheld by some secessionist telegraph employe, so that Jones did not get his orders, and the treasonable design of the captain of the cutter was carried out. The date of the telegram is January 29th, 1861. The words of General Dix were echoed by thousands of patriotic voices throughout the land. The flag of the revenue cutter (the McClelland) was saved by a loyal sailor, who saw where it was put when the Confederates hauled it down, and was given to General Butler, who sent it to General Dix, the author of the celebrated telegram.

Four years to a day from the time the Stars and Stripes were hauled down from Fort Sumter, the very same flag was hoisted again over the ruins by the same Robert Anderson, then Major, now General. The ceremonies on this occasion of restoring the old Flag to the place from which it had first been hauled down in the face of hostile Americans were very impressive. The war was over, and the South came back to the old

Flag again. There were two more stars now, representing West Virginia and Nevada, a total of thirty-six.

After the war was over, many of the loyal States provided places of deposit for the flags which had been used in the struggle, and the public exercises on the occasion of the return of the banners were of the most impressive character. Altogether the effect of the Civil War was strongly felt in causing increased reverence for the flag. The dark days of the war had brought the people nearer together, and made them feel the significance of the Stars and Stripes as the emblem of Liberty and Union to an extent that had been before unknown.

The increase of this sentiment is shown by the legislation in many States since 1897 prohibiting the use of the Flag for advertising and other improper purposes. In a number of States, also, the Flag is displayed at every school-house, that reverence for it may be instilled into the minds of the children. Most of the school-houses in some States which have no laws on the subject have flag-poles from which the Flag is displayed on certain occasions. The ceremony of saluting the Flag is conducted at regular times in the schools in many parts of the country. In the schools of New York, where a large part of the pupils are of foreign parentage, this ceremony

is thought to have a large influence in helping to make real American citizens out of the children of people who cannot even speak our language.

One of the most interesting observances connected with the Flag was instituted in Philadelphia in 1893 by Dr. Edward Brooks, who was at that time superintendent of the schools of the city. He directed that the 14th of June, the anniversary of the day on which the flag resolution was passed by the Continental Congress, should be observed as Flag Day, and marked by appropriate exercises. This custom has since been observed in Philadelphia, and has spread to a number of other cities and States, and it is to be hoped that it will become universal. We can well afford to devote a little time on one day of the year in every school in the land to impressing afresh on the children's minds the history and symbolism of our beautiful national Flag.

The question has often been asked whether the Stars and Stripes are really the most artistic combination possible for a flag. It may indeed be true that some other combination would be viewed with more favor by a competent art critic who was also an entirely unprejudiced observer. But no true American spends any of his time considering such a possibility. Our Flag, with all that it stands for, of struggle and sacrifice in the past, of freedom and security in the present, and

of bright promise for future progress in all that makes for national righteousness, is for *us* the most beautiful emblem that ever received the homage of a brave and generous people.

(NOTE, May, 1917.) The flag of Fort McHenry, which inspired the National Anthem, described at the beginning of this chapter, is now on exhibition in the National Museum, on the south side of the Mall, Washington, D. C. Only a part of the original flag remains, but it fills a large case against the west wall of the room into which the main (north) entrance of the Museum opens. In the adjoining room to the west is the case containing the "Paul Jones flag" described on pages 78 and 79. This and the case with the Fort McHenry flag are on opposite sides of the same partition. In the same case with the Paul Jones flag are the sword and musket referred to in the letter quoted on page 78.

APPENDIX.

Washington Coat-of-Arms.

APPENDIX.

A.—WASHINGTON'S COAT-OF-ARMS.

It has been suggested that the Washington coat-of-arms formed the basis of the design of the American Flag. It is not impossible that there may be some truth in this suggestion. Washington was probably acquainted with the

WASHINGTON'S BOOK-PLATE.

family coat-of-arms in his earlier life, but he did not use it on his seal, book-plate, etc., until quite late in life;—not, at least, until after the close of the Revolutionary War. Whether he had the Washington arms in mind or not when design-

ing the flags can never, in all probability, be known. If he did, that fact would account for his silence in regard to his part in the matter, for anything like self-glorification was utterly repugnant to Washington's nature. Whether or not there was any connection between the two, the resemblance between our national ensign and the coat-of-arms of the Washington family is an interesting fact.

The arms were granted in the early part of the sixteenth century to Laurence Washington, of Sulgrave Manor, near Banbury, in Northamptonshire, near the border of Oxfordshire, about seventy miles northwest from London. In heraldic language, the description is as follows:

ARMS—Argent, two bars gules, in chief three mullets of the second.

CREST—A Raven with wings indorsed, proper, issuing out of a ducal coronet or.

Translating this into English, we have: Shield white, with two red bars. On the upper part three red five-pointed spur-wheels. Crest, a raven, black, with wings on back, springing out of a golden ducal coronet. The spur-wheels were shaped like five-pointed stars.

Joseph B. Beale, of Germantown, Philadelphia, says, in a letter dated January 24th, 1909:

"My brother Albert once heard Mrs. Gilles-
"pie, a grand-daughter of Benjamin Franklin,

"say, in a speech to school-children at Inde-
"pendence Hall, or square, that Franklin sug-
"gested that Washington's stars take the place
"of the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew
"that were on the flag raised at Cambridge
"January 1, 1776."

B.—BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES IN REGARD TO THE PERSONS CONCERNED IN MAKING THE FIRST FLAG.

ROBERT MORRIS was one of the commanding figures of the Revolution. His exertions in procuring money for the cause are believed to have been essential to the success of the war. He was very conservative, and held back from the final step of declaring for independence for a long while. The fact that he was a member of the group who were associated in ordering the sample flag suggests the idea that the order may have been given on behalf of the "Secret Committee" of Congress, of which he was chairman. He was also on the Marine Committee, and the fact that the resolution of June 14th, 1777, was recorded between two matters which were in the province of the Marine Committee may easily have been more than an accident. Robert Morris was one of the signers of the Declaration, and several biographies of him have been written.

GEORGE ROSS was also one of the signers of the Declaration. It was he who suggested, as a suit-

able person to make the sample flag, the widow of his nephew, John Ross. His home was at Lancaster, from which place he was sent as a delegate to the Pennsylvania Assembly. He was three times chosen a member of Congress. He was active in the raising of troops, and was colonel of a regiment of "associators" of Lancaster. He was part owner of the "Mary Ann Furnace" in York County, which furnished cannon balls for the army or navy. He was a member or the Congressional Committee on Military Supplies. His activity in connection with military affairs is indicated in the following minute from the journal of Congress:—

> "May 29th, 1776. The Committee of "Claims reported that there is due . . . On "several certificates for entertaining General "Lee's guards, the sum of £14-4-0 = 37 78/90 "dollars, and that the same ought to be paid "to George Ross, Esq."

He was by profession a lawyer, and in 1778 he was made a judge of the admiralty for the State of Pennsylvania. Before him was tried the celebrated case of the sloop *Active*,* out of which grew a controversy between the United States

* See "Pennsylvania's Defiance of the United States," Hampton L. Carson, in "Harper's Magazine," October, 1908.

and the State of Pennsylvania, which lasted for nearly thirty years and almost resulted in bloodshed. Judge Ross died in 1779, aged 49 years.

ELIZABETH CLAYPOOLE was the daughter of Samuel Griscom, a builder. Her mother was Rebecca James, a sister of Abel James, of the firm of James & Drinker. She was the eighth of the seventeen children of Samuel and Rebecca Griscom, born* the first day of the year 1752. She learned the upholstery business at Webster's, the leading establishment of the kind in Philadelphia. In November, 1773, she married John Ross, son of the Rev. Æneas Ross, an Episcopal clergyman. In consequence of this marriage she was "disowned"* from the Society of Friends. John Ross had been her fellow-apprentice at Webster's, and soon after their marriage they opened an upholstery shop on their own account on the north side of Arch Street, below Third. The house is still standing, and its present number is 239. At the instance of his uncle George Ross, the young husband was engaged about the beginning of the year 1776 as one of a company to guard military stores on one of the city wharves. While engaged in this service he received an injury, from the effects of

* See Records of Northern District Monthly Meeting, deposited at Friends' Library, 142 North Sixteenth Street, Philadelphia.

which he died. He was buried* in the burial ground of Christ Church (of which church he and his wife had been attenders), at Fifth and Arch Streets, on January 20th, 1776. After the death of her husband, the childless widow continued to carry on the business at the same place. Here, near the beginning of June, 1776, she made the first Stars and Stripes, as has already been narrated. It is said that her Quaker friends twitted her with the epithet "little rebel" for making that first flag. The conference took place in the back room of the little house. One reason for this was probably to avoid being seen and heard from the street, or by any one that might come in. Mrs. Ross went to a shipping merchant and borrowed an old ship's color, from which to learn how to make a flag. This merchant is believed to have been John Ross, not related to the Signer, George Ross. He was a Scotchman, an enthusiastic supporter of the new government, and a personal friend of Robert Morris.

On June 15th, 1777, Elizabeth Ross was married to Joseph Ashburn, a sea captain in the merchant marine. She continued to carry on the business of upholstery and flag-making at the same place, while her husband went back and forth on his dangerous business. He was finally captured by the English and confined in the mili-

* Records of Christ Church.

tary prison near Portsmouth, England, called Mill Prison. Here he died in March, 1782. Among his fellow-prisoners was a young Philadelphian named John Claypoole, who had been a lieutenant in the United States service, but who at the time of his capture was employed in some capacity on an American merchant ship, which was armed and carried letters of marque. On his release from Mill Prison, after a confinement of more than a year, John Claypoole returned to Philadelphia, bringing to the widow of his friend Joseph Ashburn her husband's last messages, and his personal effects. On May 8th, 1783, Elizabeth Ashburn and John Claypoole were married.* Of the two Ashburn daughters who had been born, one was living, Eliza. She afterward married Captain Isaac Silliman.

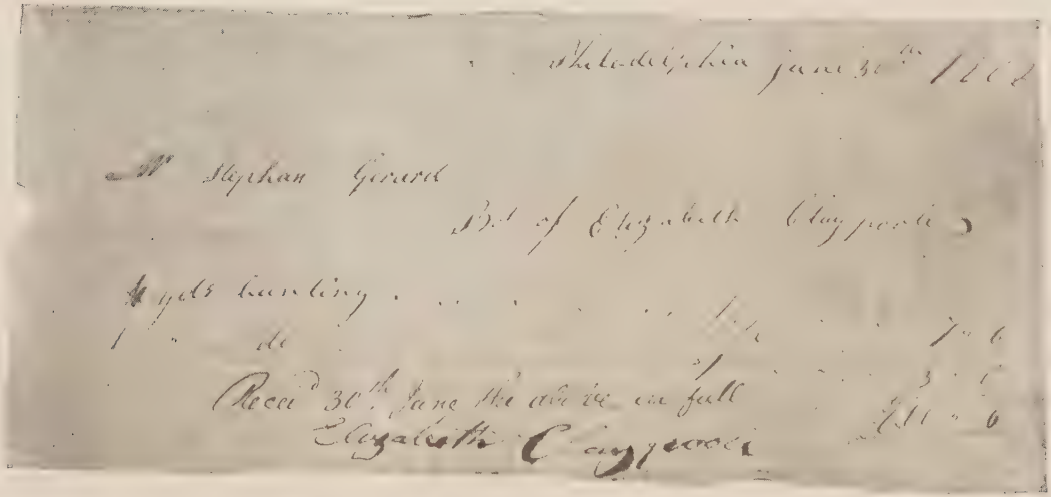
John Claypoole received an appointment in the Custom House, which he held for a time, but the upholstery business continued to be carried on without interruption. In the directories of the time the family is listed under the description, "John Claypoole, upholsterer." There is no doubt, however, that Elizabeth Claypoole was the head of the business. Her husband had been wounded at the Battle of Germantown, and all the hardships he had en-

* Family Bible in possession of Anne Balderston, Colora, Md.

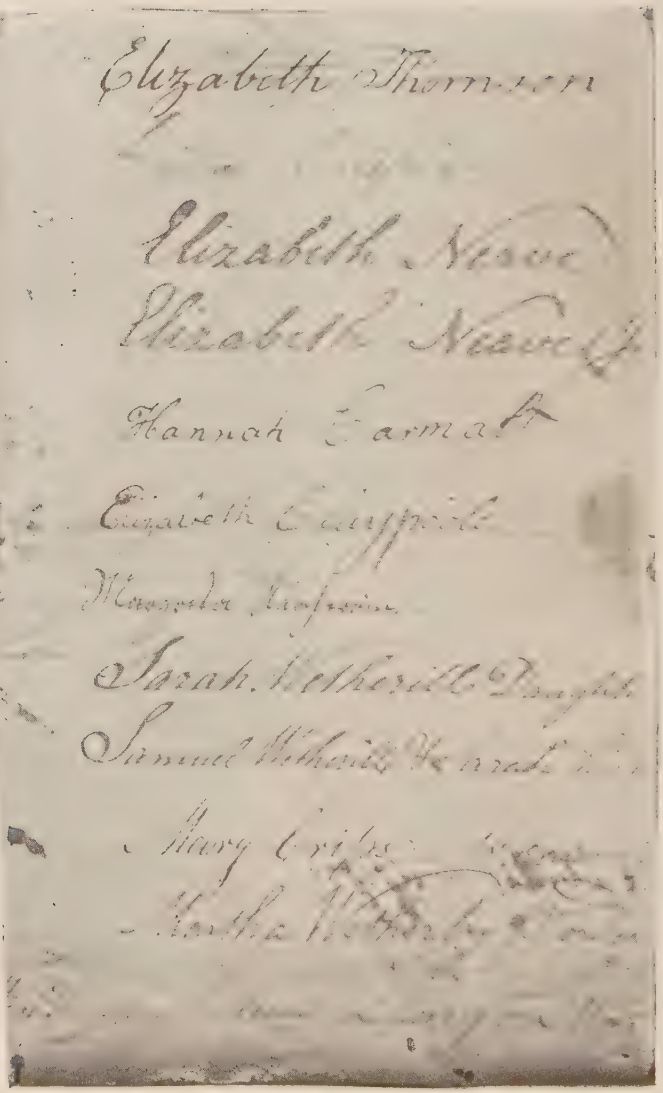
dured during his imprisonment had enfeebled him, so that at the age of about 45 he was a victim of partial paralysis, and continued a cripple and invalid to the end of his life. He died in 1817, after about twenty years of partial helplessness. During all this time and for some ten years longer, Elizabeth Claypoole, with the assistance of her daughters, grand-daughters and nieces, continued to make flags and do upholstery. Four Claypoole daughters grew up and married. With one of these, Susanna Satterthwaite, at Abington, Montgomery County, the flagmaker lived for perhaps six years after her retirement from the business. The eldest daughter, early widowed, Clarissa Sidney Wilson, had been for some years associated with her mother in the business, and continued it until 1857. During all of this time they continued to make flags for the government until Clarissa Wilson, a few years before her retirement, from conscientious motives, ceased to furnish flags for military and naval purposes.

Elizabeth Claypoole returned to Philadelphia about 1835, and the short remainder of her life was spent in the family of her daughter, Jane Canby. Here, on January 30th, 1836,* she died, at the age of 84 years. She and her husband had

* City Records, Record Room, No. 517, City Hall, Philadelphia.



Bill written and receipted by Elizabeth Claypoole, for bunting sold to Stephen Girard.



Page of signatures from the Declaration of Principles of the Free Quakers.

joined the Society of Free Quakers soon after it was established, and both of them were buried in the burial ground of that denomination, on South Fifth Street. Their remains were transferred in 1857 to a lot in Mount Moriah Cemetery.

No portrait of Elizabeth Claypoole, who has been so much talked about under the name of Betsy Ross, exists. A miniature of one of her daughters, by Rembrandt Peale, made about 1806, and one of another daughter, probably by the same artist, are in existence; but the mother, it is believed, never sat for her portrait. As a young woman she is described as very vivacious and attractive. She was reputed to be the most skilful needle-woman in the city, so that a young lady from a distance who was in the city was directed to her for repairs to an elaborately embroidered dress which had been torn. When Elizabeth had darned it, the young lady assured her that the darn was the handsomest part of the dress! She was not only energetic and skilful in the ordinary work of her arduous business, but possessed of considerable artistic skill, so that she drew the elaborate designs used in the quilting work of the period with great rapidity and accuracy, freehand. Not only was she a skilled seamstress and upholsterer, but a thoroughly efficient housekeeper and home-maker,

and a neighbor always in demand whenever there was sickness or trouble. Shortly before her death she became completely blind, and in this condition occupied some of her time in sewing carpet rags, employing her little grandsons to sort out the colors for her. Altogether she was a worthy instance of the patriot women of the Revolution, whose humble lives were so strenuous and so self-sacrificing.

C.—HISTORY OF THE BETSY ROSS TRADITION.

Elizabeth Claypoole told the story of the making of the first flag many times to her daughters, nieces, granddaughters and others. The younger women who helped her in making flags naturally heard it oftenest, and these included at different times a considerable number of relatives. It never occurred to any of these that there could be any reason for publishing the story. None of them had any literary tendency, and they no doubt supposed that the facts in regard to the making of the first flag would come out all in good time from the records of the government and the papers of the distinguished men to whom all the facts were known. When in 1857 Clarissa Sidney Wilson, the oldest Claypoole daughter of Elizabeth Claypoole, and her successor in the business, was retiring and removing from Phila-

Clarissa Sidney Wilson,
1785-1864.

Susan Satterthwaite,
1786-1875.

Rachel Fletcher,
1789-1873.

Jane Canby,
1792-1873.

The four daughters of John and Elizabeth Claypoole.

William J. Canby,
1825-1890.

delphia to Fort Madison, Iowa, she asked * her nephew, William J. Canby, to write at her dictation the story as she had so often heard it from her mother. It is probable that she had in mind simply a desire to perpetuate the story for the sake of its interest to the descendants of the maker of the first flag.

Whatever may have been her purpose in making the request, he took down the story from her lips. Nothing was done with the notes for some years, however, and when William J. Canby began to work them into shape several years later, the aunt who had requested him to write the story was already dead. He examined all the records of the period to which he had access, in the hope of finding some confirmation of the story, but without success. He then went to Washington, armed with letters from the officers of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, and made a careful search among the government records, but found nothing beyond the flag resolution of June 14, 1777, already well known. In March, 1870, he read before the Pennsylvania Historical Society a paper † telling of his fruitless search, and also narrating at some length the story which had come down from his

* See letter in the "Philadelphia Times" of May 14th, 1882, page 5, dated Washington, D. C., May 11th, 1882.

† This paper is preserved at the library of the Society.

grandmother, whom he well remembered. In order to fortify the story against cavil, he had the paper copied in a book, and then read it to three persons who had been assistants of Elizabeth Claypoole in the manufacture of American Flags, and they severally made affidavit to the correctness of the story as he had written it, and each also made a separate statement, which is a part of her affidavit.

The story was inserted by Preble in the second edition of his " History of the Flag," and in that way and by various other channels it was widely disseminated. The tale seems to have caught the popular fancy, for it has been retold very many times, and a great number of variations have been added. Of course many of the particulars of these stories were wrong. Careful persons hearing the stories, turned to the histories of the time and found nothing about the matter, and again and again the whole story was condemned as a baseless fabrication. Two points in particular were seized upon as showing that it was false. First, Betsy Ross spoke of her visitors as a committee of Congress. The records of Congress mention no such committee. It has been fully explained why this does not condemn the story. The other point was a conflict of dates. Careless narrators sometimes said that the first flag

was made in 1777. Washington was not in Philadelphia in May or June, 1777. In the affidavits accompanying the paper of William J. Canby the time given is "some time before" or "shortly before" the Declaration of Independence, at which time Washington was in Philadelphia. The fact that the new Flag had not come into use in October, 1776, as shown by William Richards' letter (page 56), has been held as a proof that no flag was made in June, 1776. The bearing of this fact has been shown, and it in no way discredits the story told by Elizabeth Claypoole to her daughters.

It has been assumed by some of the persons who have called in question the truth of the tradition that it was invented by somebody in recent years, and that it has been ingeniously modified to meet objections, and exploited in some unexplained way for the benefit of somebody. Others have supposed that Elizabeth Claypoole was an unprincipled person who sought to make capital out of a story which no one took the pains to contradict. There is absolutely no ground for either of these suspicions. None of the contemporaries of Elizabeth Claypoole contradicted her story, because every one who knew her knew that she was a truthful and in every respect an honorable woman, and the

same character pertains to every one of her daughters and other associates who have vouched for the truth of the story.

D.—AFFIDAVITS APPENDED TO WM. J. CANBY'S PAPER.

(Originals in possession of Lloyd Balderston, West Chester, Pa.)

AFFIDAVIT NO. 1. BY SOPHIA B. HILDEBRANDT.

I remember to have heard my grandmother, Elizabeth Claypoole, frequently narrate the circumstance of her having made the first Star Spangled Banner; that it was a specimen flag made to the order of a committee of Congress, acting in conjunction with General Washington, who called upon her personally at her store in Arch Street, below Third Street, Philadelphia, shortly before the Declaration of Independence; that she said that General Washington made a redrawing of the design with his own hands after some suggestions made by her; and that this specimen flag and report were approved and adopted by Congress; and she received an unlimited order from the committee to make flags for the government; and to my knowledge she continued to manufacture the government flags for about fifty years, when my mother succeeded her in the business, in which I assisted. I believe the facts stated in the foregoing article, entitled

Margaret Boggs,
1776-1876.

A niece of Elizabeth Claypoole, who was for many years her assistant in the upholstery and flag-making business.

"The First American Flag, and Who Made It," are all strictly true.

Witness my hand at Philadelphia, the twenty-seventh day of May, A.D. 1870.

S. B. HILDEBRANDT.

Affirmed and subscribed before Charles H. Evans, Notary Public.

Sophia B. Hildebrandt was the daughter of Clarissa S. Wilson, before mentioned, who was a daughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

AFFIDAVIT NO. 2. BY MARGARET BOGGS.

I, Margaret Boggs, of the City of Philadelphia, widow, do hereby certify that I have heard my aunt, Elizabeth Claypoole, say many times that she made the first Star Spangled Banner that ever was made with her own hands; that she made it on the order of General Washington and a committee of the Continental Congress, who together called personally upon her at her house on the north side of Arch Street, below Third Street, Philadelphia, some time previously to the Declaration of Independence. That they brought with them a drawing, roughly made, of the proposed flag; that she said it was wrong, and proposed alterations, which Washington and the committee approved; that one of these alterations was in regard to the number of points

of the star; that she said it should be five-pointed, and showed them how to fold a piece of paper in the proper manner, and with one cut of the scissors, to make a five-pointed star; that General Washington sat at a table in her back parlor, where they were, and made a drawing of the flag, embodying her suggestions, and that she made the flag according to this drawing, and the committee carried it before Congress, by whom it was approved and adopted. That she then received orders to make flags for the government as fast as possible; and from that time forward for upwards of fifty years she made all the flags made for the United States in Philadelphia, and largely for the other naval stations. I was for many years a member of her family, and aided her in the business. I believe the facts stated in the foregoing article, entitled "The First American Flag, and Who Made It," which has now been read to me, are all strictly true.

Witness my hand at Germantown, in the City of Philadelphia, this Third day of June, A.D. 1870.

MARGARET BOGGS.

Witnessed by Charles B. Engle and Stephen T. Beale.
Affirmed and subscribed before Charles B. Engle, Notary Public.

AFFIDAVIT NO. 3. BY RACHEL FLETCHER.

I remember having heard my mother, Elizabeth Claypoole, say frequently that she, with her own hands (while she was the widow of John Ross), made the first Star Spangled Banner that ever was made. I remember to have heard her also say that it was made on the order of a committee, of whom Col. Ross was one, and that Robert Morris was also one of the committee. That General Washington, acting in conference with the committee, called with them at her house. This house was on the north side of Arch Street, a few doors below Third Street, above Bread Street, a two-story house, with attic and a dormer window, now standing, the only one of the row left, the old number being 89; it was formerly occupied by Daniel Niles, shoemaker. Mother at first lived in the house next east, and when the war came she moved into the house of Daniel Niles. That it was in the month of June, 1776, or shortly before the Declaration of Independence, that the committee called on her. That the member of the committee named Ross was an uncle of her deceased husband. That she was previously well acquainted with Washington and that he had often been in her house in friendly visits, as well as on business. That she had embroidered ruffles for his shirt bosoms, and that it was partly owing to his friendship for her

that she was chosen to make the flag. That when the committee (with General Washington) came into her store she showed them into her parlor, back of her store, and one of them asked her if she could make a flag; and that she replied that she did not know, but she could try. That they then showed her a drawing, roughly executed, of the flag as it was proposed to be made by the committee, and that she saw in it some defects in its proportions and in the arrangement and shape of the stars. That she said it was square, and a flag should be one-third longer than its width; that the stars were scattered promiscuously over the field, and she said they should be in lines, or in some adopted form, as a circle or a star, and that the stars were six-pointed in the drawing, and she said they should be five-pointed. That the gentlemen of the committee and General Washington very respectfully considered her suggestions and acted upon them, General Washington, seating himself at a table with pencil and paper, altered the drawing and then made a new one according to the suggestions of my mother. That General Washington seemed to her to be the active one in making the design, the others having little or nothing to do with it. That the committee then requested her to call on one of their number, a shipping merchant at the wharf, and then adjourned. That

she was punctual to her appointment, and then the gentleman drew out of a chest an old ship's color which he loaned her to show her how the sewing was done, and also gave her the drawing finished according to her suggestions. That this drawing was done in water colors by William Barrett, an artist, who lived on the north side of Cherry Street, above Third Street, a large three-story brick house on the west side of an alley which ran back to the Pennsylvania Academy for Young Ladies, kept by James A. Neal, the best school of the kind in the city at that time. That Barrett only did the painting, and had nothing to do with the design. He was often employed by mother afterward to paint coats-of-arms of the United States and of the State on silk flags. That other designs had also been made by the committee and given to other seamstresses to make, but that they were not approved. That mother went diligently to work upon her flag and soon finished it, and returned it, the first Star Spangled Banner that ever was made, to her employers; that it was run up to the peak of one of the vessels belonging to one of the committee then lying at the wharf, and was received with shouts of applause by the few bystanders who happened to be looking on. That the committee on the same day carried the flag into the Congress, sitting in the State House, and made a

report, presenting the flag with the drawing, and that the next day Colonel Ross called upon my mother and informed her that her work had been approved and her flag adopted; and he gave orders for the purchase of all the materials, and the manufacture of as many flags as she could make. And that from that time forward, for over fifty years, she continued to make flags for the United States Government.

I believe the facts stated in the foregoing article, entitled "The First American Flag, and Who Made It," are all strictly true.

RACHEL FLETCHER.

Affirmed and subscribed before Thomas J. McEvily, Notary Public for the City and County of New York, July 31, 1871.

In this last affidavit, among so many particulars, it is probable that some, at least, are confused, especially in regard to order of time. It is unlikely, for instance, that Mrs. Ross had any familiar acquaintance with Washington before the making of the flag, and if she ever made ruffles for him, it was probably after he came to Philadelphia as President. The short time between the making of the first flag and the issue of unlimited orders for flags seems difficult to accept, in the light of what has been shown. But taken all together, these affidavits show that

Elizabeth Claypoole said that she made the flag about June 1st, 1776, to the order of Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross; that she suggested the five-pointed star, and that the flag then made afterward became the national standard. These statements conflict in no respect with any recorded facts so far discovered, and may therefore be accepted as showing that Washington designed the flag of Stars and Stripes, and that the first flag of this design was made about a month before the great Declaration.

E.—THE FLAG HOUSE.

The house referred to in the affidavit of Rachel Fletcher, page 115, is still standing. The picture, facing the title page, shows the house as it now is.

On December 19th, 1898, The American Flag House and Betsy Ross Memorial Association was incorporated under the Laws of the State of Pennsylvania for the purpose of purchasing the house and preserving it from possible destruction and to maintain it as a place of patriotic interest. The charter members were: Dr. Edward Brooks, Superintendent of Public Schools, Philadelphia; Dr. Adam H. Fetterolf, President of Girard College; Hon. John Wanamaker; Ex-Governor Robert E. Pattison, of Pennsylvania; Hon. John Quincy Adams, of New York;

Charles H. Weisgerber; Rev. Morgan Dix, D.D.; Superintendent John Jasper, of New York Public Schools; General Oliver Otis Howard, U.S.A.; Hon. Benj. F. Tracy; George Canby; Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan; Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf; President James MacAlister, Ph.D., of Drexel Institute, Philadelphia; Dr. Thomas Egleston, of Columbia University; Rev. Russell H. Conwell, D.D.; Colonel Asa Bird Gardiner; Lieutenant Francis A. Adams; George Clinton Batcheller; Thomas Wynne; Dr. Nathan C. Schaeffer, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Pennsylvania; Fred. H. Cozzens, of Detroit; Edward Payson Cone; Hon. Lucius E. Chittenden; Sidney L. Knauss; Rev. Henry C. McCook, D.D.; Charles W. Smith, of Philadelphia; Judge William N. Ashman; Hon. Edwin S. Stuart; William A. Carr, and General Thomas J. Stewart.

The purchase money was raised by ten-cent subscriptions, a lithograph certificate of membership in the Association being given to each subscriber. The membership certificate included pictures of the house where the first flag was made, the grave of Betsy Ross in Mt. Moriah Cemetery and a reproduction in colors of the original painting, "Birth of Our Nation's Flag," by Charles H. Weisgerber, of which a half-tone copy appears facing this page. This paint-

General Washington George Ross Robert Morris Betsy Ross

Birth of Our Nation's Flag.
By Chas. H. Weisgerber

ing was first exhibited at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and did much to stir up interest in the subject. The picture of Betsy Ross was based upon a composite portrait made up from pictures of her daughters and other data furnished by granddaughters and other descendants.

The artist has taken a proper artistic liberty in introducing the finished flag into the scene. The three distinguished gentlemen called to order the flag, but it is not probable that they called to receive it. The painting depicts worthily an event of deep interest to all Americans, and it was appropriate that it should appear on the certificates issued to the subscribers to the fund for the preservation of the house.

Mr. Weisgerber also designed the certificates of membership, seal and charter of the Association, and originated the plan under which more than a million people contributed to the fund for purchasing the house.

F.—THE GRAND UNION FLAG.

The Grand Union Flag is commonly shown with the union covering a width of seven stripes, as the blue field of the United States Flag is now always made. I have ventured to represent it with the union only six stripes wide, and therefore resting on a red stripe, because this is more

nearly like the only picture of it which is known to exist that has come down from Revolutionary times. Preble in his "History of the Flag" (p. 219, second edition), says that the historian Benson J. Lossing loaned to him a water color drawing found among the papers of General Schuyler, representing a schooner flying a flag with thirteen stripes, alternate red and white,

FLAG OF THE ROYAL SAVAGE.

and the British union. The inscription on this drawing, in the hand-writing of General Schuyler, shows that it was one of the flotilla on Lake Champlain in the fall of 1776. This flag has been mentioned on page 36. The picture, which Preble reproduces, shows the union resting on a red stripe, and, curiously enough, only four stripes deep. It will be seen from the accompanying reproduction of Preble's picture that

the proportions are about the same as those of the colored plate facing page 20.

In Lossing's "Life of Schuyler" the sketch of the Royal Savage is reproduced in a wood-cut, and, curiously enough, the flag is shown with the union covering seven stripes and resting on a white stripe. Preble, however, says distinctly that his picture is a facsimile in size and shape of the drawing found among the Schuyler papers.

G.—ADDITIONAL AFFIDAVITS AND STATEMENTS IN REGARD TO THE MAKING OF THE FIRST FLAG.

AFFIDAVIT OF SUSAN SATTERTHWAITE NEWPORT AND ADDITIONALLY MARY SATTERTHWAITE.

I, Susan Satterthwaite Newport, of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, wife of David Newport, of the same place, hereby certify that I have heard my mother, Susanna Satterthwaite, daughter of Betsy Ross, say many times that she (Betsy Ross) made the first United States Flag with the Stars and Stripes, after a design submitted to her by General George Washington, Colonel George Ross, and some other gentleman whose name I do not recall, and that my mother repeated this as having been told to her by her mother, Betsy (Ross) Claypoole. That Betsy Ross suggested some changes be made in the design of the flag, one

being the changing of the stars from a six-pointed to a five-pointed star, as being more symmetrical. These gentlemen went to see Betsy Ross at her home, which was on the north side of Arch Street, below Third Street; the number was then 89, but now changed to 239. In this house she continued in the flag business, and later was assisted by her niece, Margaret Donaldson Boggs, and the business of flag making and upholstery increased to such proportions that she employed a large force of girls. She subsequently retired from the business, and was succeeded in the work by her daughter, Clarissa Claypoole Wilson, who continued it for years, the exact date of which I do not remember. Subsequently she, too, retired from the business on account of conscientious scruples.

My grandmother was so outspoken, that when the British officers were in Philadelphia, and quartered at her house, they called her the "Little Rebel," by which name she became well known. Her intelligence and intellect characterized her as far above the average woman of the day. Her knowledge of the science of medicine was remarkable. She was an Anti-Rushite and antagonistic to the use of calomel as a drug, and to the practice of bleeding, so prevalent in the early days of medicine. She investigated the curative powers of drugs, made many formulas and compounds which were eagerly sought

by her friends and neighbors, who had confidence in her skill. One of her valuable formulas was for an excellent eye-wash.

Betsy Ross never went back to Friends' meeting after having been "read out" for marrying John Ross, who was not a Friend, but she subsequently joined the Free Quakers, some time after her marriage to John Claypoole.

Witnesses:	Signed:
CLIFTON CABELL	SUSAN S. NEWPORT
DAVID NEWPORT	MARY SATTERTHWAITE
CHAS. S. KINSEY	

State of Pennsylvania } s.s.
County of Delaware }

Before me, Percival V. Cooper, a duly commissioned Justice of the Peace in and for the Borough of Media, County and State aforesaid, personally appeared Susan S. Newport and additionally Mary Satterthwaite her sister, who, being affirmed according to law, they each and jointly do depose and say that the statements subscribed to by them are true and accurate, and so they do affirm.

Affirmed and subscribed to before me this 12th day of January, A.D. 1909.

PERCIVAL V. COOPER, Justice of the Peace.

My commission expires May 6th, 1912.

(Original in possession of Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pa.)

AFFIDAVIT OF THE CHILDREN OF STEPHEN AND LOUISA BOGGS PEALE.

We, the undersigned, sons and daughters of the late Stephen Thomas Beale, M.D., D.D.S., and his wife, Louisa Boggs Beale, of Philadelphia, Pa., hereby certify that we have often heard our greataunt, Margaret Donaldson Boggs, who resided with our parents for a period of over thirty years, relate the history of the making of the first United States Flag, by Betsy Ross.

Mrs. Margaret Donaldson Boggs was for many years associated in the upholstery business with her aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Griscom Claypoole, the Betsy Ross of history. Mrs. Boggs received from Mrs. Claypoole the following facts: That Mrs. Claypoole (at that time Betsy Ross, widow of John Ross), upholsterer, received in person at her house on Arch Street (north side), below Third Street, General Washington, Colonel Ross and Robert Morris, who submitted to her a design for a national flag. This design was changed in some particulars, and the work of making the flag was given to Mrs. Ross.

Witnesses:	Signed:
EMILY ISOLA BEALE COOPER	JOSEPH BOGGS BEALE
HENRY MOORE	ALBERT B. BEALE
HELEN J. SWANSON	DANIEL S. BEALE

RICHARD SLOAN	LOUISE BOGGS CULVER
GEO. L. BOCKIUS	CLARA S. BEALE BROOM
HELEN J. SWANSON	EMILY J. BEALE

Sworn and subscribed to before Percival V. Cooper, J. P., January 12th, 1909.

(Original in possession of Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pa.)

AFFIDAVIT OF SUSANNA MC CORD TURNER AND MARGARET MC CORD SMITH.

We, the undersigned, Susanna McCord Turner and Margaret McCord Smith, aged ninety-one and eighty-six years, respectively, members of the Flag-House Chapter, D.A.R., of Philadelphia, Pa., believe that Elizabeth Griscom Ross (Betsy Ross) made with her own hands the first national flag of the United States, according to a design submitted to her by General Washington, and afterward altered in some points by him at her suggestion, at her home on Arch Street, Philadelphia (present number 239 Arch Street). We have heard this fact stated many times by our mother, Sarah Donaldson McCord, who was a niece of Mrs. Ross, and for years a member of her household, when she, Mrs. Claypoole, carried on the upholstering business and made flags for the government. Our mother received directly from Mrs. Claypoole the history

of the making of the first flag, and of the visit to her house of General Washington, Colonel Ross and Robert Morris.

We both recollect our great-aunt, Mrs. Claypoole (Betsy Ross), I, Susanna McCord Turner, having seen and talked with her when her home was on Front Street, between Walnut Street and Dock, and I, Margaret McCord Smith, having seen and talked with her when her home was on Cherry Street, a few doors above Fifth, at the corner of Cresson's Alley.

State of Pennsylvania }
County of Delaware } s.s.

Before me, Percival V. Cooper, a duly commissioned Justice of the Peace, in and for the borough of Media, county and State aforesaid, personally appeared Susanna McCord Turner and Margaret McCord Smith (full sisters), who, being duly sworn according to law, they each and jointly do depose and say that the facts above recorded are true and accurate statements told them by their mother, Sarah Donaldson McCord, blood niece of Elizabeth Griscom (Betsy Ross), wife of John Ross, Captain Joseph Ashburn and John Claypoole, as Elizabeth Griscom was three times married.

Witnesses: Signed:

ANNIE E. GORMLEY MARGARET MC CORD SMITH

CORALIE RUBENS FREEMAN SUSAN MC C. TURNER

RUPERT GRISCOM BEALE

Sworn and subscribed to before me this 10th day of February, A.D., 1909.

PERCIVAL V. COOPER, Justice of the Peace.

My commission expires May 6th, 1912.

(Original in possession of Lloyd Balderston, West Chester, Pa.)

STATEMENT OF MARGARET MC CORD SMITH, GRAND-NIECE OF ELIZABETH CLAYPOOLE.

I am the youngest daughter of David and Sarah McCord. David McCord was the son of Mark McCord, who served in the Revolutionary War, was wounded at the Battle of Germantown, and died three weeks afterwards from the effects of his wounds. He received honorable mention at the time he obtained a furlough after being wounded.

My mother, Sarah Donaldson McCord, was the daughter of Captain William Donaldson and his wife Sarah Griscom Donaldson, daughter of Andrew and Sarah Griscom,* and a sister of Betsy Ross. After the death of my grandmother, my mother (then a child), went to live with her

* Andrew and Sarah (Dole) Griscom were not the parents, but the great-grandparents of Sarah Griscom Donaldson and Elizabeth Claypoole (Betsy Ross).

aunt, Deborah Bolton. After Deborah Bolton died, in 1793, of the fever, my mother made her home with her aunt Betsy Claypoole, and stayed there until her marriage. I recollect my great-aunt Betsy Claypoole, very distinctly. She was a beautiful little old lady, with very blue eyes. When I was about ten years of age she was living with her daughter, Mrs. Jane Canby, wife of Caleb Canby. I frequently went there, because my aunt, Mrs. Margaret Boggs, boarded there with her aunt, Mrs. Claypoole, on Cherry Street, above Fifth, at the corner of Cresson's Alley, in a large double three-story brick house. I recollect hearing my mother say, many times, that her aunt, Betsy Ross, made the first American Flag, in the house on Arch Street, below Third, present number 239. After Betsy Ross made the first flag, she had orders from Colonel Ross to buy up all the bunting she could and make flags. After the death of Mr. Ross, his widow was married to Captain Ashburn. After the death of Captain Ashburn, she was married to Mr. John Claypoole, a Custom House official. She still carried on the upholstery business, and made flags and mattresses for the ships on the Delaware River.

(Signed) MARGARET MCCORD SMITH.

(Original in possession of Dr. Rupert G. Beale, 1116 Girard Street, Philadelphia.)

H.—DIARY OF LIEUTENANT DIGBY (PAGE 36).

Since this description by Lieutenant Digby is, so far as is now known, the earliest description of the Stars and Stripes by an actual observer, it is worth while to give the story of the discovery of the passage quoted on page 62 in some detail. George Canby had been in correspondence with B. F. Stevens and Brown, of London, in regard to allusions to the flag in contemporary papers preserved in London. A letter from them dated 21 Jan., 1903, says:—

"The fort alluded to in our quotation of "30 June, 1777, was Ticonderoga, the item "reading thus:—

"'30 June. The advanced Corps made their "'appearance before Ticonderoga. We en- "'camped at Three-mile Point. The Line with "'the General were at Putnam's Creek, about "'six miles in our rear, but expected shortly "'up. We had a full view from our Post of "'their works, lines, &c., and their Flag of "'Liberty displayed on the summit of their "'Fort. Our Gunboats are anchored across "'the river out of the range of their cannon.'

"Consulting again that Journal at the Brit- "ish Museum (Additional MSS., 32413, Jour- "nal or Diary of Lt. Wm. Digby, 53d Regi- "ment, serving under Sir Guy Carleton in the "campaign from 8 April to 16 November,

"1776, and under General John Burgoyne in
"the campaign from 6 May to the surrender
"at Saratoga, Oct., 1777), in the endeavor to
"trace any mention of a flag even after July,
"1777, your first limit of date, we find the fol-
"lowing, with reference to the engagement
"near Fort Ann, 8 July, where Lt. Col. Hill,
"of the 9th Regiment, was attacked by Amer-
"icans whom he repulsed. The Diary runs
"thus:—

"'24 July. We marched from Skeensbor-
"'ough,' etc." (See page 62 for quotation.)

Thinking that the omission of the words *thirteen stars* might be a mistake of the copyist, George Canby wrote asking that the quotation be verified. The following reply was received under date 18 Feb., 1903:—

"In reply to your letter of the 2d inst., we
"beg to confirm our quotation from Lt.
"Digby's journal. We have compared it again
"with the original in the British Museum and
"find it to be correctly copied. What the
"writer precisely meant we do not presume to
"say, but there is no hiatus nor mutilation in
"the manuscript. In order that you may see
"how the words occur in the original, we give
"them line for line:—

"'They were very handsome, a Flag of the
"'United States, 13 Stripes, alternate red &

"'white, in a blue field representing a new
"'Constellation.
"'In the Evening,' etc."

In order still further to establish the correctness of this quotation, Smith Burnham, Professor of History at the West Chester State Normal School, Pennsylvania, who was in London in the fall of 1908, was asked to examine the diary. He writes as follows:

"58 Gower St., London W.C., Sept. 12, 1908.

"Dear Friend:— . . . This morning I ex-
"amined the diary kept by Lieutenant Wil-
"liam Digby, 'Additional MSS., British
"Museum, No. 32413,' to which you refer,
"under the three dates that you mention, with
"the following results:—

"Oct. 14, 1776, 'Who waveing the enemies
"'colours, thirteen stripes, declared.'

"June 30, 1777, 'Their Flag of Liberty dis-
"'played on the summit of the Fort.'

"July 24, 1777, 'At that Action the 9th.
"'took their colours, which were intended as
"'a present to their Colonel Lord Leganeer,
"'they were very handsome, a Flag of the
"'United States, 13 Stripes, alternate red
"'and white, in a blue field representing a new
"'Constellation.'

". . . The whole diary seems to be the work
"of a keen observer, who writes out very
"clearly what he sees."

In the hope of finding that Digby made some mention of flags used at the time of Burgoyne's surrender a letter was sent to the keeper of manuscripts in the British Museum, asking whether the diary had been printed, and if not, how further information in regard to it could be procured. The keeper replied that the diary had been printed at Albany in 1887, giving the author and title. Careful inquiry in the libraries of Philadelphia * failed to give any clue whatever to this book; even the publishers' lists for the year do not mention it. The Library of Congress being appealed to, a copy of the book was loaned through the library of the West Chester State Normal School, since the foregoing paragraphs were in type.

The title-page of the book is as follows:

The British Invasion from the North || The Campaigns || of || Generals Carleton and Burgoyne || from Canada, 1776-1777 || With the Journal of Lieut. William Digby || of the || 53d or Shropshire Regiment of Foot || Illustrated with Historical Notes || by || James Phinney Baxter, A.M. || Albany, N. Y. || Joel Munsell's Sons, 82 State Street || 1887. ||

The author gives an interesting and comprehensive account of the campaigns of Carleton

* It was afterward found to be in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

and Burgoyne, and then the entire diary of Lieutenant Digby, with biographical notes on the persons mentioned, and other additional information. In regard to Digby himself, very few particulars have been learned, and these are simply dates of enlistment, retirement, etc., obtained from the records of the War Office. He was among the officers who surrendered to Gates at Saratoga, October 17th, 1777.

The character of the man, as it shows in his diary, has impressed J. P. Baxter very favorably, and other readers will not fail to receive a similar impression. Lieutenant Digby does not complain of his superiors nor dwell at length on the difficulties and hardships through which he passed. He seems to have been an intelligent and accurate observer, and a man of cheerful and amiable disposition. He comments very severely on the outrages committed by the Indian auxiliaries who accompanied Burgoyne.

The clear style and placid tone of the diary are perhaps partly due to the fact that it is not an original draft, but a copy made by the author, evidently after his return to England. In the closing passage of the diary, seeking to shield his commander from censure, Digby refers to Burgoyne's explanatory letter from Albany, dated October 20th, but makes no reference to his defence in Parliament the following May.

The date of the writing out of the diary is thus fixed with reasonable certainty within six months of the surrender.

The diary was written, as Digby says in his preface, for the "partial eye of a particular friend." It is evidently based on full and accurate notes taken at the time, as the dates are given throughout, and are all correct. The fact that the copy was made after the close of the campaign explains why the wording of Lieutenant Digby's description of the flag captured at Fort Ann, follows so closely the resolution of Congress. In view of the general clearness and accuracy of his descriptions, the fact that the diary was written out later does not discredit the account which he gives of the captured flag.

Digby's story is a valuable addition to the chronicles of the Revolution, and deserves a much wider reading than it seems to have had.

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